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JULY ★ 1935

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The designing and typographical specifications for *The Southern Review* were done by PAUL JOHNSTON.

Mr. Johnston was born in Augusta, Georgia, at about the turn of the century. He spent his childhood in Denver, Colorado, and returned to Georgia, where after leaving school he worked in Atlanta in commercial art, first in a studio and then in an engraving house. From there he went to the East to study painting at the Yale School of Fine Arts, the National Academy of Design, and the Art Students' League. After some experience with such art colonies as Provincetown, Woodstock, and Silvermine, he decided that printing was a more practical art and went to work with Egmont Arens. He studied types and typography intensively and set up a private press, where he taught himself printing.

Mr. Johnston has contributed articles on printing history and typographical art to numerous publications, including the *Fleuron,* London; *Buchkunst,* Leipzig; and *The Colophon,* New York. He is the author of *Biblio-Typographica* and has edited the *Book Collectors' Packet.*

He is now engaged in industrial designing—of publishers' "trade books"—at the Van Rees Press in New York.

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HERBERT AGAR, for a number of years an editor of *The English Review,* has returned to America to live. He is to edit the Louisville *Courier-Journal.* His last book, *The People's Choice,* in 1934 won the Pulitzer Prize for history. His forthcoming book, *What Is America?,* will be an amplification of the thesis of his article in this number.

FORD MADOX FORD has a long and distinguished record, both as editor and as author. He founded *The English Review* and *The Transatlantic Review,* and he has written, among other books, *No More Parades, Some Do Not,* and more recently, *Provence.*

KATHERINE ANNE PORTER's *Flowering Judas,* a collection of short stories, won for her a Guggenheim Fellowship in creative writing. Her stories and sketches have appeared in the *Hound and Horn, The Virginia Quarterly Review,* and other magazines. Her recent book, *Hacienda,* a novelette, was published in Paris and is reviewed by Howard Baker in this issue.

RUPERT B. VANCE is a Fellow of the Institute for Social Research at the University of North Carolina. He is the author of *Human Geography of the South* and many other social studies.

JOHN PEALE BISHOP won Scribner's novelette prize some years ago with *Many Thousands Gone.* He has recently published a volume of poems, *Now With His Love,* and a novel, *Act of Darkness.* Another volume of his poetry is to be published this year.

ROBERT KENT GOOCH, Professor of Political Science at the University of Virginia, is the author of *Regionalism in France.* He is to spend next year in France working on a study of French parliamentary government.

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WALLACE STEVENS has published *Harmonium,* a volume of poems, and has contributed to *The New Republic, Poetry,* and other magazines. A new volume of his poetry has just been released.

LINCOLN FITZELL has contributed verse to *The Yale Review, The New Republic, Poetry,* and other magazines.

DONALD DAVIDSON, Associate Professor of English at Vanderbilt University, is the author of two volumes of poetry: *An Outland Piper* and *The Tall Men.* He is also a frequent contributor of various articles to many magazines, among them *The American Review, Hound and Horn,* and *The Virginia Quarterly Review.*

RANDALL JARRELL, a student at Vanderbilt University, has contributed poems to *The New Republic, The American Review,* and other magazines.

R. P. BLACKMUR'S poetry and critical articles have appeared in numerous places, including *The American Mercury, Poetry, The Nation,* and *Hound and Horn.*

RAYMOND DANNENBAUM has been editor of *The Jewish Journal* and the director of *The Liberal Forum* of San Francisco. His poetry has appeared in *The Southwest Review.*

GEORGE MARION O'DONNELL is a student at Vanderbilt University. He has contributed to *Direction* and *The American Review.*

ALDOUS HUXLEY is well known for *Point Counterpoint, Chrome Yellow, Two or Three Graces, Brave New World,* and numerous other volumes of fiction, verse, and criticism.

EDWARD DONAHOE lives in Ponca City, Oklahoma. His stories have appeared in *Space,* and he is at present completing a novel.

MANLEY O. HUDSON, Bemis Professor of International Law at Harvard, has been a member of the Permanent Court of Arbitration since May, 1933. He is the author of *The Permanent Court of International Justice, International Legislation: 1919-29,* and has long been a distinguished writer in the field of international relations and law.

JESSE STUART lives in the hills of Kentucky, about which he writes. His *Man With a Bull-tongue Plow,* a book of sonnets, appeared in 1934. He has

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contributed to *The Dublin Magazine, Poetry, The New Republic, The Yale Review, Story,* and other magazines.

KENNETH BURKE was on the staff of *The Dial* from 1927 to 1929. He has published a novel, *The White Oxen,* and two critical books, *Counter-statement* and *Permanence and Change.* He has contributed to *The Little Review, The Bookman, Symposium, Hound and Horn, Poetry,* and *The New Republic.*

HOWARD BAKER is the author of a novel, *Orange Valley,* and has contributed to *The American Review, Hound and Horn,* and other periodicals. He is now working on a second novel.

JOHN DONALD WADE, Professor of English at the University of Georgia, has written two biographies, *Augustus Baldwin Longstreet* and *John Wesley.* He is the author of many critical essays on American literature, and has published articles in *The American Review, The Virginia Quarterly Review,* and other periodicals.

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER has published many volumes of poetry, of which *Preludes and Symphonies, Black Rock,* and *Irradiations* are perhaps best known. He has been a frequent contributor of verse and criticism to numerous magazines, and another volume of his poetry is to appear in the immediate future.

ANDREW NELSON LYTLE has published a biography of Nathan Bedford Forrest. He has contributed frequently to *The New Republic, The American Review, The Virginia Quarterly Review, Hound and Horn,* and other magazines. He is at present working on a biography of John C. Calhoun.

MANSON RADFORD lives in New Orleans. His poetry has been published in *The American Review.*

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Publication of letters of comment and criticism received by the editors and contributors.

CULTURE VERSUS COLONIALISM IN AMERICA

Herbert Agar

HAVING BEEN told many times that the future must be a strife between communism and fascism, a number of Americans are beginning to believe it. But their hearts are not given to either side; so the belief leads to pessimism, to the conviction that America is sold out and that there is nothing left to do but complain cleverly.

Such an attitude has the merit of completeness. It satisfies the part of the human mind that cries for an answer at any cost, even at the cost of suicide. But there is no excuse, as yet, for Americans to seek this shoddy comfort. We have a harder task and a more exciting. It is our job to save a corner of the world from the twin despotisms that encroach on Europe. If we do this we shall take a proud place in history. If we fail to do it we shall take no place at all; we shall just be a colony: a huge but awkward copy of the parent civilization.

If we are to seize our chance for greatness we must fight both the defeatism of the pessimists and the greedy optimism of those whose picture of a pretty future is a return to 1928. Our hope lies in the fact that we once had a political tradition which could give an answer in terms of freedom to this false fascist-or-communist dilemma. We have weakened that tradition shamefully, by taking its name in vain. We have betrayed it item by item while assuring each other that we were merely adapting it to the modern progress. It will not be easily revived today. Yet there is our job. All over the United States men are waking to that knowledge at last.

The first step toward reviving native America is to define it. And before it can be defined it has to be isolated. The "real" America, from which a native Culture can grow, has to be distinguished from colonial America which seeks only to copy Europe. The present essay tries to make this distinction even at the risk of overstating the differences.

During six years of living in England I learned one basic fact about my own country. I learned that the best traits in American life are not the traits we have copied faithfully from Europe but the traits we have freely adapted, or else originated—the traits which are our own. I learned that in so far as America is an imitation of Europe, she is not so good as the original. This merely means that in so far as we are a colonial race we share the usual shortcomings of colonialism. "Society" life in the big cities of America is an example. "Society" has of course become ridiculous all over the Western world. The bourgeois revolution of the nineteenth century, the rise of stock-market wealth to a power and prestige overshadowing landed wealth, doomed urban "society" to a comic-section end. But granting that it is absurd everywhere, "society" in New York or Chicago is more absurd than in London. In London, something that once had dignity and purpose has grown sick and silly; in Chicago something sick and silly has been carefully improvised. A colonial status is a poor one at best; it becomes abject in a period when the model is not worth copying.

Modern American art offers a similar example. In so far as our art is a copy of French Modernism, it is colonial and inferior. As Mr. Thomas Craven writes:

> Those who regard art as modish decoration, as inarticulate embellishment, have every reason to favor French Modernism, and every incentive to buy it. And it is more sensible to buy the original manufactures than the American imitations. Truly, they order these material things better in France. In the exhibition at the Chicago Fair, the French painters of the modern School of Paris made the American painters attached to that school look seedy and second-rate.

But there is another American art, such as that of Mr. Thomas Hart Benton, which has nothing to do with French Modernism, with Bohemia's abstract aloofness from Europe's passion and despair. This other art deals

with American life; for side by side with our colonialism there is an America which makes an original contribution to the culture of Christendom.

The Colonial mind at its silliest is shown in our veneration for French cooking. Even in the South, where our native cooking will bear comparison with the cooking of any land, it is almost impossible in a first-class hotel to get anything but base imitations of the French. In a city of Tennessee, a hotel has carried this tendency one step further than is usual: over the door of its grillroom is a large sign reading *Le Grillé*. But even in this somberly named room, with its suggestion of a roasted heretic, the French cooking is vile and the American cooking does not exist. Presumably, the hotel managers know their business. Presumably, the traveling American public wants Parisian dishes even if they are always limp and tasteless, rather than American dishes to which the local cooks could do justice. But if this is true, the traveling public is colonial minded.

II

The town of Sheridan,* in the Middle West, illustrates the two Americas, and also the half-conscious fight taking place between them—a fight that will determine our future.

Sheridan is a suburb of one of our giant cities. Its population increased from thirty-seven thousand in 1920 to sixty-three thousand in 1930. But Sheridan is not yet "suburban." Having a strong local pride it has thus far kept its own identity. It has not become merely another dormitory to the giant city. It still has the character of a Middle Western small town. But it will not have this character for long, if recent tendencies continue unchecked into the future. For Sheridan is living on its spiritual capital. It is using the virtues that are left over from the past rather than tending the soil from which these virtues grew. Native America will not win its fight unless it grows more conscious of the danger, more vigilant in defence.

The most striking feature of life in Sheridan is that a feeling of equality is still almost universal, at least among the whites. It is an unforced equality, which is so widely accepted that it does not need to call attention to itself. A delivery-boy will meet the wife of a college professor on the street, and will wave his hand at her and call out, "Hello there, Mrs. Holt, you're look-

* This is a real town, which I am calling by a made-up name because I am using the town for what is typical in it, not for what is individual.

ing just fine today." The clerk at the grocery store will say, "Good morning, Mrs. Holt. Why, you've washed your hair." And the ice-man will find Mrs. Holt digging in her garden, and will stop to tell her, "Don't plant your tulips there—it's too shady. Plant them over by that wall, where they'll have a chance to grow."

Social democracy of this sort is of course widespread in rural America. But there are few towns, and fewer suburbs to great cities, where it still is dominant. And in the big cities themselves it is giving way more and more to a nasty caricature of equality: a defensive smartness that has none of the virtues of equality and none of the virtues of a class-system.

Relations between people of different incomes, backgrounds, and education can be made smooth either by the institution of equality or by the institution of social classes. Either will work agreeably; either will promote human dignity. The one thing that will not work agreeably is a mixture of the two, which often occurs in American big cities. When you get into a New York taxicab wearing a top hat your driver may be a friendly soul who assumes that in spite of your clothes you are human. In that case he will give you a trial, and at the next red light will start on murder, politics, or the strange habits of the taxi-riding public. On the other hand, your driver is quite likely to be a man who not only believes in classes but who believes, reasonably enough, that his own class is unenviable. The sight of your top hat will not soothe him. He will make it clear that he thinks you neither useful nor pretty. For with the exception of the small group of trained domestic servants, the American who is class conscious has become so in order to vent a grievance, commonly a just grievance, against society. He therefore gets no comfort from the American system of equality, and no comfort from the foreign system of classes.

The Englishman, on the other hand, who believes he has a "place," who can define that "place" exactly, and who respects it, does not feel hampered by the class-system; he feels protected. He has been given a form, or fiction, with the help of which he can deal comfortably with people who are very different from himself. Go into a "pub" in an English village and the crowd in the bar-parlor will fall silent. You may think they are silent out of respect for your exalted position. That was what a friend of mine thought (he is professor of history at an American university), and he was indignant

at such servility. He should have saved his anger. The English countryman is unimpressed by shiny shoes or city clothes. The silence is curiosity. And so far from finding the stranger an object of awe, the company is judging him. First they want to classify him; then they want to know whether they like him. If they do, and he has enough information to join in their talk, he will find how class distinctions can smoothe out social intercourse. And if they don't like him he will find what a clear and splendid difference there is between being granted "superior" social position and being looked up to, or even tolerated.

The English system is just as good a way of securing ease and stability in social relations as is the American system. Each system is a fundamental social institution, affecting the whole life of the community. Each system is a factor in the culture of the country where it has been established. Each system, while working healthily, ensures against class consciousness in the Marxian sense. But neither system, today, is working healthily. The American system, like the English, is living on momentum from the past, and may die with the present generation unless the conditions that bred the system are kept alive.

It is heartening to find Sheridan preserving its social democracy on the doorstep of a giant city where "equality" has no meaning at all, where a landless, toolless Marxian proletariat faces a Marxian bourgeoisie. There are several reasons why Sheridan has been able to do this. In the first place, it has kept a high standard in its public schools. Practically all the children of the town, therefore, are sent to these schools, so that the boy who grows up to be an ice-man and the girl who grows up to be the wife of a college professor may have sat side by side in class. This is often said to be customary in America; but it has long been quite uncustomary among people who, like many citizens of Sheridan, could afford to send their children to private school.

In the second place, there is no class of very rich people in Sheridan, and hardly any very poor. Though there is a wide range of income, there is no fantastic gulf of the sort that makes "equality" a joke. In the third place, the sense of civic pride among the citizens has been so strong that the town provides a number of amenities for all—not only cultural amenities, but abundant tennis courts, swimming beaches, and the like. These are well

kept, with the result that the rich feel no need of having their own tennis courts, their own bath-houses and strips of beach. And not being over-rich they feel no need of advertising their pride. So they all use the communal facilities. In the fourth place there is a university in Sheridan, and the university has a large group of students from Middle Western farms where social democracy is as natural as breathing.

This equality which still lingers in Sheridan, making the half-hour drive from the huge neighboring city seem a bridge between two worlds, is a vital part of American culture. But what of the city, the antithesis to Sheridan? If the giant city grows and flourishes, Sheridan will die. And the city, with its skyscrapers, millionaires, gangsters, and polyglot proletariat—is not the city typical of America, too? Yes; but it is not typical of American culture. It is my thesis that the city stands for the other America—big, loud, and un-self-confident as a new boy at school, but not half so native as Sheridan, not half so well rooted, and in the end not half so strong.

Since Sheridan survived 1929, it may never be engulfed. It is still threatened, but its old character is not yet gone. Perhaps Sheridan will turn back and save the institutions which gave it that character, instead of accepting its metropolitan doom. If it does, the moment when the tide turns, the moment when the city stops encroaching on its tiny neighbor, will be an important moment in the story of American culture, and an important moment in world history. In order to show how I can hope for such an event, I must explain what I mean by the phrase, "American culture." In common speech the phrase has little meaning, or else a meaning that is clear but trivial.

III

In the advertising columns of the *American Magazine* for November, 1934, there is a sample of the popular use of the word, culture. "At Palm Beach and Nassau, California and Cannes," reads the caption under a picture, "every year they flock by scores—those smart cultured women with enough money to indulge the slightest whim. And the number of them who use Listerine Tooth Paste is amazing."

And in the *Saturday Evening Post* for December 1, 1934, in an article called "An Industrial Design for Living," the following sentences occur: "Our nation has been on the receiving end of a cultural movement

the like of which would be hard to imagine. All the colleges, all the magazines, the newspapers and the movies, have been indoctrinating people with the idea of beauty in person, in clothing and in background, until they have developed an appetite for such things beyond ordinary comprehension."

Here we have two of the commonest uses of the word: culture as female wealth and smartness, and culture as a consumer's demand for beauty, a demand that has been whipped up by "all the colleges, all the magazines, the newspapers and the movies." The first use of the word is silly enough to be harmless. People are in no danger of believing that a cultured nation is a nation composed chiefly of beautiful bare young women "with enough money to indulge the slightest whim." But the second use is evil, for it leads to misunderstanding. It is a form of the heresy that culture is a thing which can be stored in libraries and museums. Culture, in this sense, is not a way of life but something you learn at school, like plane geometry, or something you catch, like measles. If you have learned it or caught it, if you have "been on the receiving end of a cultural movement," then you will know about beauty and will want some of it. And if you want beauty you will go to the shops where it is for sale and buy as much as you can afford, or as much as you have room for at home.

This is the industrial-commercial view of culture, as is made clear in the *Saturday Evening Post* article, which continues as follows: "The old-time pioneers who pushed beyond the Alleghanies felt that they had a continent to explore, and, if your mind runs that way, to exploit. But we who came after them, or rather, out of them, have lived into a time when the pioneering has come into something richer than a green continent. It is a fertile region that lies somewhere between the human intelligence and the human soul. Developing it will provide plenty of work for all the machines that can be contrived and all the labor that exists."

The last sentence is perfect. The "pioneers" are done with exploring North America, and they find themselves with quite a lot of redundant machinery on their hands. So they decide to "develop" the "fertile region that lies somewhere between the human intelligence and the human soul." By "developing" it they mean making it "beauty-conscious"; they mean teaching it to want goods and gadgets that have "eye-appeal." If you are in the market for goods with "eye-appeal," you have culture. Your "fertile

region" has been developed. Of course, as the inventors turn out more and more machines, we shall have to get more and more cultured. In time, even our tooth paste and our telephones will have "eye-appeal." Everything we buy will be beautiful, and we'll buy an astonishing lot (for yesterday's eye-appeal can always be made into today's eye-sore). In this way America should become the most cultured nation in the world's history.

This industrial-commercial view of culture, which sees it as the next field for industry "to explore, and, if your mind runs that way, to exploit," flourished during the years when Big Business was glorified. During the 1920's there were people who thought that as soon as Mr. Hoover finished solving the problem of poverty, Americans would apply sound business principles to the Higher Life and would shortly be delivering large packages of beauty and truth to every taxpayer. Today such people, though less hopeful about Mr. Hoover, still think that culture can be "laid on" like gas or water. They believe that if only a group of technocrats, or bureaucrats, or commissars, would organize things so that the whole working population would have mechanical jobs for four hours a day and freedom for twenty, the national demand for Higher Life would be too surprising for words. They may be right, for what they mean by higher life is reading "good books," going to concerts and picture galleries, and listening to lectures. None of these pastimes has any necessary connection with culture. The American public, for example, might spend its time reading Greek and Roman literature, looking at Italian and Dutch paintings, hearing German and Russian music, and attending lectures by visiting playwrights from Vienna and Budapest. The result would probably be a nation of prigs. I see no reason to think it would be a nation with culture. "If I read as many books as that man," said Hobbes, "I'd be as big a fool as he." "Beware of the man who would rather read than write," warns Bernard Shaw. Beware of the nation whose culture means admiring the creativeness of other people.

The Pittsburg *Sun-Telegraph* for February 25, 1935, ran the following editorial:

> Andrew W. Mellon, former Secretary of the Treasury, spent more than $4,000,000 to buy six famous paintings, five of them from Soviet

Russia. He planned to build a great art museum in Washington to house his famous collection of pictures, worth about $19,000,000.

One by one he bought at huge prices great works of art from European collections in order to realize his dream of making Washington the art capital of the world.

Mr. Mellon is proof of the utter falsity of the conception, once so widespread abroad, of American millionaires as ruthless money-grubbing materialists.

In no other nation on earth, at no other time in history, have great individual fortunes so generously served the permanent scientific and artistic interests of mankind as here.

This is the perfect expression of false, colonial, imitative culture. The thought that Washington could become "the art capital of the world" by becoming the storehouse for a lot of Italian and Flemish and Byzantine paintings is a thought that does no honor to the human mind. Just as a city is a place where people live, not a place where they are buried, so an art capital is a place where art is produced, not a place where it is put away.

If the industrial-commercial concept of culture is dismissed to its proper home in the advertising columns, how can the word be redefined so that it can throw light on American life? As a prelude to trying such a redefinition, American life must be placed in a scheme of world history.

IV

Until quite recently, the prevailing theory of history was the one devised to fit the nineteenth century theory of progress. It showed man as advancing, in the course of a few thousand years, from a shocking and brutal-looking ancestor with long hair and a club to something quite commendable, like Mr. H. G. Wells. The advance was usually shown in two parts: first the advance from cave-man to classical civilization; then, after a brief relapse during the Dark Ages, a further advance to the mechanical triumphs of the modern world. The picture is a perfect example of false conclusions drawn from facts which are true but inadequate.

It is true that man was once a primitive nomad, possessing none of the arts of civilization. It is true that man, in certain parts of the world, has

now become something which may fairly be symbolized by Mr. Wells. It is true that from our point of view Mr. Wells is more engaging than the cave-man, which means that there has been progress. But what is quite untrue is the assumption underlying so much progressive thought, that this advance has been along one fairly constant line, that millennium by millennium the progress has continued, and that it can be described in some such terms as a steadily increasing power to control the physical environment, or a steadily increasing store of real and final knowledge, or a steadily increasing friendliness toward larger and larger groups of people—a friendliness that began with the family unit and is destined to end by embracing the world state. This outmoded nineteenth century view of progress was summarized by Woodrow Wilson when he told an audience that "all through the centuries there has been this slow painful struggle forward, forward, up, up, a little at a time, along the entire incline, the interminable way."

It is a comforting view, for it suggests that if man refrains from committing suicide he will grow better and better until the time comes when he will have every reason for self-satisfaction. Such a theory of history transplants the Garden of Eden from the past, where it provoked nostalgia, into the future, where it provokes a lively hope. Heaven is transplanted out of space, where it was unattainable except by the grace of God, into time, where it becomes merely a question of patience, like waiting for the next train. But for all its soothing qualities the theory is now dying. It has been mortally hurt by the work done during the last thirty years in archeology, anthropology, comparative religion and literature. Its place is being taken by a more complicated and less flattering view, which has at least the merit that it can be reconciled to the known facts.

The old division of history into Ancient, Medieval, and Modern is being scrapped. It was a division which cut straight across the facts, separating events that belonged together and joining others that had nothing in common. Instead of one long gratifying advance, with ourselves as the latest and most improved model of humanity, what history really shows is a series of high Cultures passing through similar stages of growth and decay. In China, in Mexico, in India, in Mesopotamia, in Egypt, and now at last in our own West, we can trace this pattern. Out of a group of farming settlements a new culture is born, no one knows why. The challenge of life is

suddenly met by a new affirmation. A new statement is made of man's old faith that life has a meaning and that the meaning is good. In our case, in the years between 500 and 1000 A. D. this birth took place in Western Europe. The Christian affirmation defined itself; it permeated the spirit of Western man; it began to find expression in social institutions which were to form the thought and manners of a continent.

The new culture, of course, may be much influenced by the remains of a previous civilization which occupied the same, or neighboring, lands—just as the emerging Western culture was influenced by the Classical. But the basic affirmation of the new culture, though it may be built on many foreign contributions, will be its own, will be characteristic. The Christianity of the West clearly rests on Hebrew, Classical, and Arabian foundations. Yet the religion of Western man is not just a version of a religion from Asia Minor, or from any other part of the dying Roman world. It is a new thing, born with Western culture and unlikely to survive it.

No historian can say why this new thing came to birth during those centuries, and in just that part of the world. But once the thing is born (and assuming that it is given a chance to grow, that it is not wiped out by force), the historian can predict certain stages through which it is likely to pass. He can predict, in the first place, that the life-drama of the new Culture will take the form of a conflict between the deep instinctive faith which is the essence of the Culture and an abstractly rationalizing self-destructive element which is a feature of man's mind. He can predict that religion (the expression of this deep faith) will dominate in the early period of the Culture, that art and abstract thought will for a time be religion's servant. (For Western man, this is the period from the birth of his Culture to about the end of the thirteenth century.)

The historian can predict that a little later there will be a second stage, where a more even balance is attained. The inquiring, self-probing mind becomes steadily more confident. Art and thought are secularized, though they are still for the most part in harmony with religion. They have not yet begun their final task of tearing up their own roots. (This is the period corresponding, roughly, to the years 1300-1700 in Western Europe.)

The historian could also predict the character of the third period—which has proved the last great period of every previous Culture. In this

period the perilous balance between faith and critical thought slowly breaks down. The questioning, nihilistic mind, which in the beginning was religion's servant, and in the second period its ally, becomes its master. The instinctive faith weakens; the critical and analytical power is left undirected. In its new freedom it knows a burst of energy. The ardor of the human spirit, which was once shared between heaven and earth, is now lavished solely on practical ends. The results are impressive. In every culture this is the time of imperial expansion, of great world cities, of mechanical triumphs: the giant buildings of Luxor, the Great Wall of China, the straight proud Roman roads across the body of Europe, the straight proud steel belittling the American sky. This is the time when man learns to do so many striking things that his brain is warped with his own grandeur and he makes the mistake of thinking he understands the forces he is using. This is the period reached by Western man in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The historian could go still further. On the basis of the same analogy with other cultures he could predict what is likely to be the mood and meaning of Western man's next stage. There is clearly no proof to these predictions; they are not a doom imposed upon us; but they are a useful warning, for hitherto none of the many cultures of which we have knowledge has escaped this final stage. Seeing what happened in the period comparable to our twentieth century in the Classical world, in the Cultures of Egypt, Mesopotamia, India and China, the historian can say that instead of being on the verge of a final triumph Western man is probably on the verge of despair. For the crowning work of man's criticism, having discredited the thought and religion of the past, is to discredit the mind that criticizes. At the moment when intelligence dreams it is about to reach out and explain all things, it wakes to the annihilating theory that explanations are relative, that one is often as good—or as bad—as another. The mind which has dissolved the basic faith on which the whole culture rested, ends by dissolving itself, ends in Classical scepticism, ends in Eastern despair, ends in European nihilism and relativity. For the rootless intellect means nothing, leads nowhere, and cannot even sustain the will to struggle. At the highest point of the Civilization's physical achievement, this poisonous doubt strikes it, and it falls.

When a people have reached this stage of disillusionment, the rest of their story can be imagined. They can still do all their mechanical tricks, but the heart has gone out of such tricks except for the silly few who can enjoy themselves doing nothing but making money. The old faith in religion has faded under the attacks of the critical mind; the new faith in reason has proved a fraud under the self-slaughtering honesty of the same mind. And then appears one of the strangest but most often repeated facts of history. Man is stricken with sterility. In his giant cities he finds himself too bored or too unzestful even to breed normally. Rome was weak with depopulation long before the barbarians pulled her down. Just as the birth of every culture-cycle is marked by a new affirmation of life, the end is marked by a hospitality to death. Man lies down tired in the midst of his marvels. His numbers dwindle, his cities stand half empty, and once again the beasts of the wilderness prowl among ruined buildings.

Spengler reminds us that "Samarra was abandoned by the tenth century; Pataliputra, Asoka's capital, was an immense and completely uninhabited waste of houses when the Chinese traveller, Hsinan-tang, visited it about A. D. 635." And he cites a whole group of late Classical writers—Polybius, Strabo, Pausanias, Dio Chrysostom, Avienus—who tell "of old, renowned cities in which the streets have become lines of empty crumbling shells, where the cattle browse in forum and gymnasium, and the amphitheatre is a sown field, dotted with emergent statues and herms." And Mr. Charles Francis Atkinson adds that in the days of the Roman decline, "the amphitheatres of Nîmes and Arles were filled up by mean townlets that used the outer wall as their fortifications." The turn of the population-tide in the Western world is clearly fore-shadowed today.

In succeeding ages, after such a decline has run its course, the dwindled population takes refuge in the countryside, where, if not attacked from without, it multiplies until it pushes on the limits of subsistence, until it reaches the state of the teeming agricultural East.

A civilization, therefore, may simply fall into inner desuetude, enduring for milleniums as the booty of successive conquerors, like Egypt, or China, or India. But a civilization may also die suddenly, not merely looted but murdered, as happened to Mexico at the hands of the Spaniards. Here was one of the most dramatic confrontations in history: an old civilization

where doubt and relativity had clearly done their corrosive work, and a group of energetic bandits from a world that still had trust in itself.

Tenochtitlan was an imperial city, on a scale that Western man was not to create for centuries. "We were amazed," wrote Bernal Diaz del Castillo, who fought with Cortez, "and said that it was like the enchantment they tell of in the legend of Amadis, on account of the great towers and *cues* and buildings rising from the water, and all built of masonry. And some of our soldiers asked whether the things that we saw were not a dream. . . I do not know how to describe it, seeing things as we did that had never been heard of or seen before, not even dreamed about." But the simple Spaniard was wrong. Such things had been seen and heard of many times before: in Imperial Rome, in Baghdad and Tell-el-Amarna, in the world-cities of the last years of every civilization. They were to be seen in the Western world after another four hundred years, by which time London and Paris and New York had taken on shapes that would have startled Cortez's soldiers quite as much as did Tenochtitlan—and by which time, in certain deep and decisive matters, the point of view of London and Paris and New York was closer to that of the Aztec city than to anything that Cortez's men could have understood.

Montezuma, for example, said to Cortez, "Throughout all time we have worshipped our own gods, and thought they were good, as no doubt yours are." Diaz tells us the Spaniards were amazed at such a remark; but a New York literary critic, in 1935, quotes Montezuma with approval, just after calling Spanish Catholicism "a provincial religion." And the critic represents his age faithfully. It is right that he should approve of Montezuma's relativism: world-city is talking to world-city, and they speak the same language. Montezuma was a "civilized" man. He knew that all truths are relative, that all the high eternal Gods have ruled over comparatively small areas in space and time. He knew, therefore, that it would be banal to fight over religion. But the fierce and greedy Spaniards knew nothing of the sort. They knew that their religion was *true*—not true for them or true for the sixteenth century, but true for all men forever. So they fell on the tired cosmopolitans of that ageing city, and a handful of men abolished one of the world's marvels.

The New York literary man cannot approve of such self-confidence. He finds it definitely provincial.

Je suis l'Empire à la fin de la décadence
Qui regarde passer les grands Barbares blancs,
En composant des acrostiches indolents
D'un style d'or où la langueur du soleil danse.

Doubtless there were many Aztec nobles who felt just that way.

Là-bas on dit qu'il est de longs combats sanglants.

But why should a "civilized" man stir himself to a lot of vulgar fighting?

V

This cyclical view of history need not breed pessimism. Spengler, the great popularizer of the view, has used it to vent a pathological despair. As if driven to expiate some enormous guilt he offers the whole Western world as sacrifice to Fate, and he knows no words too impolite for the victim who demurs. With a scream of italics and exclamation marks, Spengler falls upon him: This is what *has* to be! History cannot be interfered with! Bare your throats and *don't argue!*

I should think, however, that a sincere Christian would be bound to argue, would be bound to insist that a pattern may have repeated itself eight or ten times and still be only a pattern, not a doom. For instance, it is reasonable to predict a sorry end for a man who has become a steady, sodden drunkard; but it would be stupid to say the man was doomed to such an end. He might have a religious conversion and become a saint. The only safe prediction we can make is that if nothing unusual happens the man will die a sot. Similarly, the only safe prediction about our cosmopolitan civilization is that if nothing unusual happens it will not turn out to be the start of a splendid new era, but the start of another dreary decline. In Europe, the unusual happening might be a revival of Christianity; in America it might be a strengthening of our native, as opposed to our colonial tradition.

While taking this hopeful view it would be wrong to ignore the warnings implicit in the new theory of history. It is right to reject determinism; it is right to insist that if we have the moral energy we can still save our

Christian civilization from the fate which struck all the great civilizations that have gone down to the grave; but it is wrong to let ourselves be soothed by the silly dream that good must somehow triumph in the end since man has already progressed all the way from the mud to Mr. Henry Ford. Man has certainly progressed; but the point of the story told by modern archeology and history is that man has also declined, and with sinister regularity. He has not pushed steadily on, with a few temporary setbacks. On the contrary, he has risen again and again to what has seemed the top of his powers, and fallen again and again to a level not far above where he began. There are signs today that he may be preparing to fall once more, and though my own view of America's future is a hopeful one, it would be stupid not to take these signs into account, not to present my hope against the background of a real danger.

The great dividing line in the history of a high culture (such as the Classical, the Egyptian, or that of Western man) is the line between the second and third periods. On the one side of that line there is still a fruitful tension between instinct and intellect; on the other side the balance has been destroyed and the nihilistic mind has silenced the faith on which the whole culture rested. Spengler uses the word, Culture, for the period before that fatal division, and the word, Civilization, for the period that follows. The use of the words in this sense is arbitrary; but the distinction he makes is useful for an understanding of America today.

In these terms, Sheridan stands for American Culture, the giant city for Civilization. According to the pessimists, who have seized on the cyclical theory of history to justify their best fears, the giant city must win. And it is true that in the past, once the period of civilization has been reached, the clock has never turned back. The giant world-city, with its cosmopolitanism, its scepticism, its falling birth-rate, its lack of morals, its imitative and then its decadent art—in the past, each time this recurring prodigy has appeared, the stage has been set for an age of Caesars, of wars and dictatorships and aimless crowds kept quiet by doles, or by bread and circuses. In every characteristic detail, we seem to be giving our own Western version of the dejecting picture. Where our religious life, for example, has not been killed by scepticism, it shows signs of decaying into an eclectic superstition. Like the Romans who brought Isis and Ariman to the Tiber,

many Westerners today flirt with Buddhism, or follow Hindu fakirs, or make strange mixtures of their own, adding a dash of neo-platonism to a smattering of Lao-Tse.

There are good reasons for pessimism. And I agree with the most despairing that if Civilization (the point of view of the world-city) became dominant in America, if the judgments, the ambitions, the interests, the conditions and habits of life, represented by Chicago and New York became the standard of the country, we would be old without ever having been young. We would be as old as Europe, but ours would be a graceless old age. No maturity, no serene memories, no wisdom—only decrepitude and loss of purpose. We should not be a rich culture drawing to an end with dignity; we should be just another colonial nation going down hill with (or perhaps before) the parent stock, without ever having been anything on our own. We should deserve the jibe flung at us by Mr. Belloc in a magnificent passage where he gives the European Christian's answer to the pessimism that assails Europe:

> Our Europe cannot perish. Her religion—which is also mine—has in it those victorious energies of defence which neither merchants nor philosophers can understand, and which are yet the prime condition of establishment. Europe, though she must always repel attacks from within and from without, is always secure; the soul of her is a certain spirit, at once reasonable and chivalric. And the gates of hell shall not prevail against her. . .
>
> Her component peoples have merged and remerged. Her particular famous cities have fallen down. Her soldiers have believed the world to have lost all, because a battle turned against them, Hittin or Leipzig. Her best has at times grown poor and her worst rich. Her colonies have seemed dangerous for a moment from the insolence of their power, and then again (for a moment) from the contamination of their decline. . . She will certainly remain.

It is a proud boast. And even the attack on America is not unworthy. An American who has lived long abroad knows too well why foreigners take this view. They hear nothing about us except news from our world-cities, plays and books about our world-cities (or else plays and books and news

about our country-side from the point of view of our world-cities). They know America as a Civilization; America as an attempt at a Culture they do not know at all. And how should they? After six years in London I began to wonder, myself, whether there was such an America, or whether I had made it up and called it memory.

Why should Europe respect us as a big-city Civilization? As a Civilization we are derivative and second-hand; we have the instability of people who are not themselves. As a Civilization we are somebody else's Culture grown old. But we, the people, are not old. And the combination, though surprising, does not breed confidence. In art, in talk, in lack of morals, in cosmopolitan nihilism, New York is old. As old as Vienna, yet as vital as a gold-rush camp. The vitality would be attractive if it were lavished on something young; it is bizarre when it is lavished on decay.

There is no capital in Europe where cynicism and defeatism are more constant than in New York. But in Europe they are negative qualities, as fits their nature. In Europe they are a mood of tired disdain. In New York they are boyish and positive as battle-cries. In New York men announce their ironies with a kind of hopeful ardor. The cartoonist, James Thurber, is an illustration. In Europe men are puzzled by Mr. Thurber. Not because they are strangers to his withering view of humanity. Thurber's men and women—small, misshapen, and malignant; sub-human because they have no trace of purpose, no memory of hope; sub-bestial because they have none of the dignity of beasts—Europe is accustomed to this view of human nature. From the early Huysmans to Anatole France to Aldous Huxley, half the cleverest minds have been perfecting it for seventy years. But what perplexes Europe is to find this scornful picture combined with such gaiety. Through all these deadly libels there runs a nursery touch. Enormous rabbits, fantastic misplaced seals, huge comforting dogs—if the men and women could be expunged, these drawings would be decorations for a child's bedroom. The mixture, to someone born in Mr. Thurber's world, is telling. But to many Europeans the mixture is merely distressful. They have their own picture of what age and disillusion should resemble. They do not like to know there can be such things as ancient, contemptuous children.

The mixture of moods that is found in a Thurber drawing is characteristic of New York. These boisterous pessimists, these hearty drunk-

ards, these perverts who declare their barrenness with a happy grin—they make New York an exciting place, a puzzling place. I can see why Europeans should enjoy it, why they should marvel at it. But I cannot see why they should think well of it. I cannot blame them for predicting, like Mr. Belloc, a swift decline.

In Europe, if the soul is growing old, if hope and faith are dying, there is something to fall back on: the eternal tradition of the land, a religion that still makes the lives of millions, a memory of many disasters weathered. But to be old unnaturally, without these memories, without this background, is to be unstable. And Europe, knowing only those spots in America that suffer from abnormal, derivative old age, rightly judges us unstable. Civilization, in America, is derivative. It is colonial, and hence rootless. New York is colonial and rootless. But our provinces are not colonial. American Culture, so far as there has been one, is not colonial. Sheridan is a new thing in the world, a product of American soil. But in all essentials, Chicago and New York are as old as Luxor—and just about as important to the future.

These generalizations on Culture and the modern world cannot be proved. They are not offered as revelations. They are offered to suggest the following thoughts about our own Culture: in America we have the beginning of a Culture. It is derived from Europe, of course, and has the same ancestors as the Culture of Europe; but it has been here long enough to take on a native character. If it were let alone we might hope for an American contribution to history. It has not been left alone. It has been overlaid, and hampered increasingly, by an alien imitative old age, a colonial-minded old age. The story of America today is the story of the struggle between these two forces. And there are reasons for hoping that the native America may win.

If these generalizations are true, then it is a primary duty for Americans today to be nationally self-conscious, to seek an answer to the question, What is America? If we cannot answer that, we cannot hope to make the real America come true. And if we do nothing, if we drift with the tide of modern history, our country might as well never have been founded. For the tide of modern history, at least in Europe, is not a pretty tide.

TECHNIQUES

Ford Madox Ford

TECHNIQUE IS perhaps the most odious word in the English language. I hope that by adding the above "s" some of the odium may be dispelled. It is necessary from time to time to emphasize the fact that writing in general and imaginative writing in particular are the products of craftsmanship. In the middle ages a craft was called a mystery. It is a good word, for it is a mystery why we write and a mystery how great writers do it.

They do it by observing certain rules—or after having observed certain rules for a long time, by jumping off from them. You may if you like say that great literatures have only arisen when technical rules have been jumped off from—Shakespeare and the Elizabethans having jumped off from the classicisms of *Ferrex and Porrex;* the Cockney School of Poetry from the classical stultifications of an Eighteenth Century in decay; or Flaubert and the French, English, and American Impressionists, whose methods I propose here to analyse for you, from the classical slipshodnesses that preceded them. The case of the Impressionists differs from that of the others, however, in that they practised, and, when they had the time, enjoined, a tightening rather than any slackening of the rules.

Sang Mr. Kipling:

> There are five and forty ways
> Of inditing tribal lays
> And every single one of them is right!

That is to say that Mr. Kipling, having proved himself an extraordinarily great master of the most difficult of all crafts—that of the short and short-long story writer—had to hasten to excuse himself by proving that at heart he was, and always meant to be, an English gentleman. For the English gentleman may write . . . but before all things he must not be a writer. He may, that is to say, at odd moments sit down and toss off something, but he must not do it earnestly or according to any rules. Or, if he does observe any rules, he must hasten, hasten, hasten to assert that he does not. Otherwise he would not be received in really good drawing-rooms.

I do not mean to assert that occasionally a masterpiece may not be tossed off or that the roll of Royal and Noble Authors does not number a master or two. You have Clarendon who wrote the *History of the Rebellion,* Beckford who wrote the *Letters from Portugal* . . . But how much more Clarendon might we not have had, had he not been father to a queen, or how much more Beckford, had he not found it necessary to be the nabob-builder of Fonthill? And above all, how much more Cunninghame Graham if Mr. Robert Bontine Cunninghame Graham had not happened to be, in addition to the 'incomparable writer of English,' Earl of Monteith, King of Scotland if he had his rights, and the very spit and image of his connection, Henri IV of France.

That indeed is the real tragedy of English literature . . . is why England has in fact no literature but only some great, isolated peaks. For, to possess a Literature, a country must have a whole cloud—or better still, a whole populace—of writers instinct with a certain skill in, a certain respect for, a certain productivity of, writing. You must in that country be able to go, say to a railway bookstall, and by merely stretching out a random hand, take the first book that comes and find it to be, for certain, well written, well constructed, instinct with a certain knowledge of the values of life—such a work in short, as a proper man may let himself be seen reading without loss of self-respect. You can do that in France, you could do it in Germany before Mr. Hitler began his burnings; you are beginning to be able to do it in the United States. But in the home and cradle of the writings of our race you have not been able to do it since the XVIIth Century—when of course there were no railway bookstalls. It is only a respect for a technique that

can ensure this form of civilization for a country because the writing of books is a difficult matter—the writing of any kind of book.

I am going to write particularly about the writing of works of the imagination—and specifically about the writing of novels. But the factual book is susceptible of, and gains as much by, care in construction, and the poem gains as much by attention to lucidity or verbiage and progression of effect, as does any novel. The convention of the narrative is as important to the historian of the battle of Minden as it is to the novelist trembling lest any slip in his construction should make his reader slacken or altogether lose his interest.

And the real difference between the writers of the Impressionist group, who since the days of Flaubert have dominated the public mind, and their predecessors is that the post-Flaubertians have studied, primarily, to hold just that public mind, whilst their predecessors, though wishing obviously to be read, never gave a thought to how interest may be inevitably—and almost scientifically—aroused. The novelist from, say, Richardson to Meredith thought that he had done his job when he had set down a simple tale beginning with the birth of his hero or his heroine and ending when the ring of marriage bells completed the simple convention. But the curious thing was that he never gave a thought to how stories are actually told or even to how the biographies of one's friends come gradually before one.

The main difference between a novel by the forgotten James Payne—who in his day was a much respected and not too popular novelist—and a work of the unforgettable author of *The Turn of the Screw,* who also, you will observe was a much respected and certainly not too popular novelist, is that the one recounts whilst the other presents. The one makes statements; the other builds suggestions of happenings on suggestions of happenings.

On the face of it you would say that the way to tell a story is to begin at the beginning and go soberly through to the end, making here and there a reflection that shall show that you, the author who is to be forever present in the reader's mind, are a person of orthodox morals and what the French call *bien pensant.*

But already by the age of Flaubert, the novelist had become uneasily aware that if the author is perpetually, with his reflections, distracting his

reader's attention from the story, the story must lose interest. Some one noticed that in *Vanity Fair* when Mr. Thackeray had gradually built up a state of breathless interest and Becky Sharp on the eve of Waterloo had seemed almost audibly to breathe and palpitate before your eyes, suddenly the whole illusion went to pieces. You were back in your study before the fire reading a book of made-up stuff though the moment before, you would have sworn you were in Brussels amongst the revellers . . . And that disillusionment was occasioned by Mr. Thackeray, broken nose and all, thrusting his moral reflections upon you, in the desperate determination to impress you with the conviction that he was a proper man to be a member of the *Athenaeum Club* . . . He had, with immense but untrained and unreflecting genius, built up a whole phantasmagoria of realities in which his reader really felt himself walking amongst the actors in the real life of the desperate day that preceded Waterloo . . . And then the whole illusion went.

It would be idle to say that it was Flaubert who first observed that the intrusion of the author destroyed the illusion of the reader. Such ideas arise sporadically across the literary landscape and get finally adopted by one or other of the distinguished though, long before that, they will have been in the air. And Flaubert more than any of his associates clamored unceasingly and passionately that the author must be impersonal, must, like a creating deity, stand neither for nor against any of his characters, must project and never report and must, above all, forever keep himself out of his books. He must write his books as if he were rendering the impressions of a person present at a scene; he must remember that a person present at a scene does not see everything and is above all not able to remember immensely long passages of dialogue.

These dicta were unceasingly discussed by the members of Flaubert's set who included the Goncourts, Turgenev, Gautier, Maupassant and, in a lesser degree, Zola and the young James—this last as disciple of the gentle Russian genius. They met in different cafés and restaurants from the Café Procope which still exists, if fallen from its high estate, to Brébant's which has now disappeared. And their discussions were frenetic and violent. They discussed the *minutiae* of words and their economical employment; the *charpente,* the architecture, of the novel; the handling of dialogue; the renderings of impressions; the impersonality of the author. They discussed

these things with the passion of politicians inciting to rebellion. And in those *coenaculae* the modern novel—the immensely powerful engine of our civilization—was born.

You get an admirable idea of the violence of these discussions from the several accounts that exist of the desperate encounter that took place between the young James and the giant of Croisset over a point of the style of Merimée. The assembly, it would seem, had been almost unanimous in its contempt for the style of Merimée and the young James, sitting, a *jeune homme modeste,* as he afterwards used to style me, in the shadow of Turgenev, had ventured to join in the chorus. But that an American should dare to open his mouth in those discussions proved too much for the equanimity of Flaubert. He said so. He said with violence . . . To think that an American should dare to have views as to the French of one of the greatest of France's stylists! Only to think it, was enough to make Villon, Ronsard, Racine, Corneille, Chateaubriand—not of course that their styles were anything to write home about—turn in their graves . . .

The pale young James was, it is recorded, led away by the beautiful Russian genius who, nevertheless, induced that brave young trans-Atlantic to call with him next day upon the giant who had inflicted that flagellation. And Flaubert, as I have elsewhere recorded, received Turgenev and his young American friend in his dressing-gown, opening his front door himself, a thing that, till the end of his life, Mr. James regarded as supremely shocking.

I don't mind repeating myself in the effort to emphasize how absolutely international a thing literature is. For Henry James, retiring to an England that appeared to him to be all one large deer park across which the sunlight fell upon ubiquitous haunts of ancient peace—the young James then, like those birds who, carrying the viscous seeds of the mistletoe on their bills and claws, establish always new colonies of the plant of the Druids, planted for a little while in the country of my birth the seeds of the novel as it at present exists.

It is said that James directly influenced Conrad in his incessant search for a new form for the novel. Nothing could be more literally false but nothing could be more impressionistically true. London was at that date—the earlier nineties—a veritable bacteriologist's soup for the culture of modern

germs, and the author of *Daisy Miller, Roderick Hudson,* and *The Princess Casamassima,* being enthusiastically received in a city that was weary to death of the novels of James Payne, William Black, and the rest of the more or less respected, sowed around him, like the mistletoe-spreading birds, an infinite number of literary Impressionist germs. And if Conrad, as is literally true, learned nothing directly of James, yet he found prepared for him a medium in which, slowly at first but with an always increasing impetus, his works could spread. It was the London of the *Yellow Book*, of R. L. Stevenson, that sedulous ape, of W. E. Henley, that harsh-mouthed but very beneficent spreader of French influences.

It was a city of infinite curiosity as to new literary methods and of an infinite readiness to assimilate new ideas, whether they came from Paris by way of Ernest Dowson, from Poland by way of Conrad, or from New York or New England by way of Henry James, Stephen Crane, Harold Frederick, or Whistler, Abbey, Sargent, and George Boughton. London had in fact been visited by one of its transitory phases in which nothing seemed good but what came from abroad. We were to see another such phase in '13 and '14 in the flowering days of Ezra Pound, John Gould Fletcher, Robert Frost, Marinetti, the Cubists, the Vorticists, and how many other foreign movements that were to be crushed in the bud by the iron shards of war. We may see another tomorrow. At any rate it is overdue.

II

Into that hothouse came Conrad who had drunk of exactly the same springs as the laureate of Washington Square and the Common at Boston. He had not had the advantage of being personally flagellated by Flaubert but, unlike Mr. James who, if he may be taken as having forgiven the flagellation, never, never, never, could forget the *robe de chambre*, Conrad had for Flaubert, years before he ever saw London city, an infinite veneration—an almost incredible passion for his writings, his power over phrases, his ideas of how books should be written, his berserker's literary personality. And ideas possessed Conrad with a passion that was almost an agony. It was painful sometimes to hear him read passages from Flaubert aloud, so immensely would he be impressed—and depressed—by the idea of that writer's impeccable unapproachableness. He was possessed by that divine form of jealousy of his fellow writers: when he came upon great passages

in their works he would cry despairingly: "Why should Destiny have given to that fellow all those powers and to me a mere pedestrianism? Why? Why?"

James, on the other hand, appeared to regard his fellows with an aloof and extremely deferential irony which rose to the stage of humorous self-deprecation when their personal successes seemed to put them beyond the reach of material anxieties. Flaubert was for him always: "Poor, dear old Flaubert," largely, I am convinced, because towards the end of his life the Sage of Croisset, like Sir Walter Scott, suffered severe pecuniary losses. But Mr. Kipling and Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch were "writers who unite in their singular personalities, as I am told, considerable literary talents, to an altogether enviable gift of popularity such as you, my modest young friend or I—*moi qui vous parle,*" laying his right hand over his heart and slightly inclining himself, "could never hope to attain to."

How often, how often, how often, haven't I heard those words issue from his lips as applying not merely to Messrs. Kipling and Couch, but to poor Steevie, to Mrs. Humphry Ward, and to a dozen others whose enviable gifts of popularity were infinitely superior to their literary talents.

Crane, on the other hand, was possessed by a passion, almost as vivid as that of Conrad himself, for elisions—for cutting his phrases down to an almost infinite economy of words. He was never tired of exasperatedly declaring that it was his unattainable ambition to make every one damned word do the work of six. So, for him, as it remains for me, his one ewe lamb amongst his books, was *The Third Violet*—a novel that appears to be almost irreclaimably forgotten even by those who have *The Red Badge of Courage* and *Maggie* by heart. I have been preaching the claims of that book for years and have never, so far as I know, made a single convert.

Those three then were, almost equally, the protagonists of literary Impressionism in Anglo-Saxondom, lesser lights like Henry Harland, Ernest Dowson, Miss Ethel Maine, and others whom it is unjust to forget but whom my treacherous memory won't recall—many others, then, in a little cloud of witnesses, having aided in that Renaissance.

It advanced, that alien cloud, across the sunlit landscape of the English nuvvle with its quiet homesteads, cathedral closes, deans, bishops, county families, and hygienically clean milkmaids. And, when it had passed over,

forever gone was the simple story that accompanied the Ruling Class young hero from his birth to his bell-haloed union with the pink-frocked daughter of the manor, forever gathering roses in the sunken garden that had been there since the day of Shakespeare... Gone at least forever from the awakened literary consciousness. For Meredith—who, if he was anything, was the poet of *Love in a Valley* and the *Sage Enamoured and the Honest Lady* or of *The Woods of Westermain*—and the dear, great gnarled, Greek poet, Thomas Hardy—who also wrote some novels—endured on the earth for a few years more. And, heaven knows, there remain till today whole broods of nuvvelists who have never, even yet, got the Squire, the Dean, the peer's daughter, the rose-garden, the manor, and the home farm out of their heads. And they enjoy enviable gifts of popularity and chortle somnolently along through lands where it is always summer afternoons... and God bless them. For I would far rather see a thousand ham novelists gaining comfortable competences and enjoying blissful post-prandial slumbers after the ingurgitation of x glasses of admirable port than one layman who has made his millions by the invention of electrically piloted warplanes or the canning of mountains of usually putrid salmon... Nevertheless, for the literarily awake they have no more existence or perdurability than the thin reflections of sunken gardens seen on the glass windows of rushing automobiles.

III

I began by writing the word 'techniques' rather than 'technique,' so as to soften the impact on the ear of that harsh dissyllable. For there is not one only Technique, a chill enemy of mankind known only to and arbitrarily prescribed by a pedantic circle of the highbrow *intelligentsia*. Not one only, but just as many as there are writers, each one differing by a shade, the one from the other, until the difference between the leader of the advancing line and the boy at its end is as great as that that lies between the limpidities of Merimée and the clouds of virtuosities of *Du Côté de Chez Swann* or of *Ulysses*. Yet we are all going to Heaven and Turgenev shall be of the company.

Mr. Kipling was perfectly right when he wrote that there are five and forty ways for the writer. There are probably five hundred thousand, every single one of them being right. But to tell the whole truth, he must have

added that there is only one best way for the treatment of every given subject and only one method best suited for every given writer. And such advocates of the study of technique as Conrad or Dowson or James or Crane or Flaubert are far more interested in the writer's finding himself than in establishing any one rule that shall cover every tribal lay. The young writer, for whom I am principally writing, or the old man setting up as writer, will inevitably—and very properly—go through the stage of expressing himself. He will inevitably desire to get out of his system his reactions to sex, wine, music, homosexuality, parents, puritanism, death, life, immortality, technocracy, communism and existence amongst the infinite flatnesses beneath the suns and tornadoes of the Middle West or the Mississippi Delta. But once all that *Sturm und Drang*—once that milk fever—is inscribed on fair paper, the joys of autobiography are past. The aspirant finds himself faced, if he is to continue writer, with the drear necessity of rendering one human affair or another. It is then that he will have to go in search of a technique that will suit him as well as the one fishing-cane that will be indispensable to him if he is to cast his fly exactly upstream before the jaws of the waiting trout. For there are innumerable techniques but only one best one for each writer.

What then is a techique? It is a device by which a writer may appeal to his fellows—to so many of his fellows that, in the end, he may claim to have appealed to all humanity from China to the Tierra del Fuego. Nothing less will satisfy the ardent writer—the really ardent and agonisingly passionate renderer of affairs like Flaubert or James. And there are some who attain to that stupendous reward. At any rate I have been informed by a German firm of world-book distributors that the one book that they export all over the world—to Rio de Janeiro as to the Straits Settlements, to Prague as to Berkeley, Cal., and Pekin is—*Madame Bovary*.

This does not mean that I am asking the neophyte to pass his life writing *pastiches* of the affair in which poor Emma was involved. But it does mean that, if he is a prudent man, he will read that book and *Education Sentimentale* and *Bouvard et Pecuchet* a great many times, over and over again, with minute scrutiny, to discover what in Flaubert's methods is eternal and universal in appeal. And having discovered what he thinks that to be, he must experiment for a long time to see whether he can work in

that method as easily as he can live in an old and utterly comfortable coat . . . or dressing gown. And so he must go on to other writers. For the history of Emma Bovary is not alone amongst world-and-all-time best sellers. Next to that, and circling the globe in flights almost as numerous, come the *Pilgrim's Progress* and the *Pickwick Papers*. . . And long before them stands the *Imitation of Christ* and a little after that the *Holy Bible*. To each of these works, not excluding the religious masterpieces, the neophyte may well apply his microscopes and his diminishing glasses. At the last he shall come into his own.

He will come into his own when, reading those works a final time in a spirit of forgetfulness, for pleasure and with critical faculties put to sleep, he shall say: "Such and such a passage pleases me," and casting back into his subconsciousness shall add: "This fellow gets that effect by a cadenced paragraph of long, complicated sentences, interspersed with shorter statements, ending with a long, dying fall of words and the final taptaptap of a three monosyllabled phrase. . ." Just like that.

That was the quite conscious practice of Conrad when seeking to be dramatic as it was the only less conscious practice of Flaubert. And, if you will read again my last paragraph, you will see how dramatic—how even a thought vulgar—such a cadence may be.

Or it may be that the devices of Conrad and Flaubert, as you take them to be, do not suit your book after your painful studies. Or you may say that Flaubert in France and Conrad in America lying under temporary clouds of oblivion, you will never attain to the enviable gift of extended popularity if you let them in the slightest degree exercise an influence on you. Try then Hudson.

Hudson, or his Latin-American running mate, Mr. Cunninghame Graham, the most exquisite living of *prosateurs* in English, though of right King of Scotland. Or *The Third Violet* of Stephen Crane who for his own purposes professed to have been born and bred in the Bowery but was actually the son of some one of episcopal standing. You will discover that Hudson gets his effects by an almost infinite and meticulous toning down of language. If you should be fortunate enough to get hold of some of his proofsheets, you will see that he simplifies to the utmost and then beyond.

I remember observing—for I went once or twice through his proofs for him —that he had once written: "The buds developed into leaves." He substituted "grew," for "developed." And, finally the passage ran: "They became leaves". . . But of course, behind Huddie's prose there was that infinitely patient temperament of the naturalist, that infinite conscientiousness of observation, that have given the world White's *Natural History of Selborne,* the few writings of Thomas Edward, the Scottish naturalist—who taught *me* all I know of cadences; as well as the *Sportsman's Sketches* of Turgenev with its matchless *Bielshin Prairie* and, only yesterday, Miss Gordon's *Aleck Maury,* which has a singular spiritual kinship to the *Recits d'un Chasseur*. But that quality is the product of a temperament. You may have it or you may not. If you have it you will write beautifully—but you can never acquire it. The longest study of Hudson or Turgenev will do no more for you than turn you into a writer of *pastiches*. Galsworthy would have been a real major writer if Mr. Edward Garnett had not forced him to read Mrs. Garnett's wonderful translation of *Fathers and Children*.

But by all means read them for the exquisite pleasure they will give you.

Mr. Graham you may read as self-consciously as you will. His prose is always aristocratically unbuttoned; he approaches his subjects with the contemptuous negligence of the Highland Scottish noble or the Southern plantation owner. But that very contempt gives him a power of keying down drama till the result is an economy of resource such as only Stephen Crane, himself aristocratically contemptuous, has otherwise attained. There is a short—a very short—story of Mr. Graham's called "Beattock for Moffatt"—the railway porter's cry meaning: 'Beattock, change for Moffatt' —which is one of the great tragedies. It projects nothing more than the railway journey of a dying, homesick Scot of no importance, going home, with a vulgar and uncomprehending but not unkindly Cockney wife, to die of tuberculosis in Moffatt. His whole mind is given to seeing Moffatt again after a long obscuration in London. . . And in the keen air after the stuffy railway carriage on Beattock platform he dies, being fated never again to see Moffatt, that Carcassonne of the North. . . dies whilst the porters are still calling 'Beattock for Moffatt'. . . It is told almost as summarily as I have told it. . . but with just those differences of touch that make the

passing of that obscure Scot as lamentable—nay, more lamentable!, than the death of Hector.

The secret of poor Steevie is very much akin to that of Mr. Graham, be his method of approach to his subject never so different. Mr. Graham—the Don Roberto of a hundred drawing-rooms—with contemptuous negligence does not record; Crane with nervous meticulousness excises and excises. Both having an unerring sense of the essential, the temperamental results arrived at are extraordinarily similar. A Crane drama will end:

The Girl said:

"You say . . ."

He answered:

"Observe that I have never ventured to say . . ."

She threw the third violet at his feet . . .

Something like that—for I have no copy of *The Third Violet* from which to quote—but you can observe that, a situation of poignance having been established, such an end may be of an extreme drama.

If you compare it with the famous last sentence of *The Turn of the Screw,* you will see how two writers of the same school and training, using very similar methods in all the essentials of rendering an affair, may give an entirely different temperamental turn to their endings.

"We were alone with the quiet day," wrote Mr. James confidently and beautifully, "and his little heart . . ." he continues confidently still. But then you hear him mutter to himself. "This is too direct. This will give the effect of the *coup de canon* at the end of a Maupassant story . . . We must delay . . . We must give the effect of lingering . . . We must let the reader down gently." . . . And into the direct statement that was to be completed he inserts the qualificative word "dispossessed." "We were alone with the quiet day and his little heart had stopped," would have been reporting of a high order. But: "We were alone with the quiet day and his little heart, dispossessed, had stopped," is the supreme poetry of a great genius. And yet of an amazing economy.

But it was perhaps Crane of all that school or gang—and not excepting Maupassant—who most observed that canon of Impressionism: "You must render: never report." You must never, that is to say, write: "He saw a man aim a gat at him"; you must put it: "He saw a steel ring directed at him."

Later you must get in that, in his subconsciousness, he recognized that the steel ring was the polished muzzle of a revolver. So Crane rendered it in *Three White Mice* which is one of the major short stories of the world. That is Impressionism!

IV

But the great truth that must never be forgotten by you, by me, or by the neophyte at the gate, is that the purpose of a technique is to help the writer to please, and that neither writing nor the technique behind it has any other purpose. In evolving the technique that shall fit your fishing-pole you have to think of nothing but how to please your reader. By pleasing him, you hold his attention, and once you have accomplished that, you may inject into him what you please: for you need not forget, when you write a novel, the gravity of your role as educator: only you must remember that in vain does the fowler set his net in the sight of the bird. The reader wants to be filled with the feeling that you are a clever magician; he never wants to have you intruding and remarking what a good man you are.

I will try to inculcate this most important of all lessons by presenting some instances from the writers best known to myself. With all the others I have mentioned—with the exception of Flaubert who was dead, and of Maupassant who had retired from active life before I entered the bull-ring that is the literary life—with all the others I discussed literary problems and their personal techniques, debating rather strenuously with Crane and Hudson and listening with deference to Henry James, Henry Harland, Henley, Miss Ethel Mayne, and others of the *Yellow Book* and the English-American Impressionist group.

With Conrad I descended into the arena and beside him wrestled, rain or shine, through the greater part of a decade. I will therefore now take two or three instances of details of technique and show how we approached them. Conrad, I may say, was more interested in finding a new form for the novel; I, in training myself to write *just* words that would not stick out of a sentence and so distract the reader's attention by their very justness. But we worked ceaselessly, together, on those problems, turning from the problem of the new form to that of the just word as soon as we were mentally exhausted by the one or the other.

That we did succeed eventually in finding *a* new form I think I may permit myself to claim, Conrad first evolving the convention of a Marlow who should narrate, in presentation, the whole story of a novel just as, without much sequence or pursued chronology, a story will come up into the mind of a narrator, and I eventually dispensing with a narrator but making the story come up in the mind of the unseen author with a similar want of chronological sequence. I must apologize for referring to my own work but, if I did not, this story would become rather incomprehensible and would lack an end, since after Conrad's death I pursued those investigations with a never-ceasing industry and belief in the usefulness of my task—if not to myself, then at least to others. For it is almost as useful to set up an awful example that can be avoided as to erect signposts along a road that should be taken.

We evolved then a convention for the novel and one that I think still stands. The novel must be put into the mouth of a narrator—who must be limited by probability as to what he can know of the affair that he is adumbrating. Or it must be left to the official Author and he, being almost omnipotent, may, so long as he limits himself to presenting without comment or moralization, allow himself to be considered to know almost everything that there is to know. The narration is thus a little more limited in possibilities; the 'author's book' is a little more difficult to handle. A narrator, that is to say, being already a fictional character, may indulge in any prejudices or wrong-headednesses and any likings or dislikes for the other characters of the book, for he is just a living being like anybody else. But an author-creator, presenting his narration without passion, may not indulge in the expression of any prejudices or like any one of his characters more than any other; for, if he displays either of those weaknesses, he will to that extent weaken the illusion that he has attempted to build up. Marlow, the narrator of *Lord Jim,* may idolize his hero or anathematize his villains with the sole result that we say: "How real Marlow is!" Conrad, however, in *Nostromo* must not let any word or preference for Nostromo or Mrs. Gould or the daughters of the Garibaldino pierce through the surface of his novel or at once we should say: "Here is this tiresome person intruding again," and at once lose the thread of the tale.

You perceive, I trust, how our eyes were forever on the reader—and if, during our fifteenth perusal of *Madame Bovary* we discerned that—as Flaubert himself somewhere confesses—the sage of Croisset was actually in love with poor Emma Bovary, his creation, we hastened to observe the one to the other that *we* must never let ourselves indulge in such mental-carnal weaknesses. A giant like Flaubert might get away with it: but we must avoid temptations . . . So you perceive how constantly we considered the interests of You, my Lord, in case You should one day want to glance, for diversion, through the pages we were evolving.

We were, in short, producers who thought forever of the consumer. If Conrad laid it down as a law that, in introducing a character, we must always, after a few vivid words of personal description, apportion to him a speech that *must* be a characteristic generalization, it was because we were thinking of You. We knew that if we said: "Mr. X was a foul-mouthed reactionary," you would know very little about him. But if his first words, after his introduction were: "God damn it, put all filthy Liberals up against a wall, say I, and shoot out their beastly livers. . ." that gentleman will make on you an impression that many following pages shall scarcely efface. Whomever else you may not quite grasp, you won't forget *him*—because that is the way people present themselves in real life. You may converse with a lady for ten minutes about the fineness of the day or the number of lumps of sugar you like in your tea and you will know little about her; but let her hazard any personal and general opinion as to the major topics of life and at once you will have her labeled, docketed and put away on the collector's shelf of your curious mind.

Similarly, in evolving a technique for the presenting of conversation, I—and in this it was rather I than Conrad, just as in the evolution of the New Form it was rather Conrad than I, though each countersigned the opinion of the other and thenceforth adopted the device so evolved—I then considered for a long time how conversations presented themselves to the mind. I would find myself in a room with a gentleman who pursued an almost uninterrupted monologue. A week after, I would find that of it I retained, verbally, only his more characteristic expletives—his 'God bless my soul's,' or his 'You don't mean to say so's' and one or two short direct speeches: "If the Government goes to the country, I will bet a hundred-

weight of China tea to a Maltese orange that they will have a fifty-eight to forty-two majority of the voters against them." But I remembered the whole gist of his remarks.

And so, considering that an author-narrator, being supposed to have about the mnemonic powers of a man with a fair memory, will after the elapse of a certain period, be supposed to retain about that much of a conversation that the Reader may suppose him to have heard, I shall, when inventing conversations, give about just that proportion of direct and indirect speecch, in which latter I shall present the gist of my character's argument. . . For, if I give more direct speech than that, the reader will say: "Confound it, how does this plaguy fellow remember an oration like that, word for word? It's impossible. So I don't believe a word he says about anything else," and he will pitch my book into the wastepaper basket. . .Of course I shall lard the indirect speeches with plenty of 'God bless my soul's' and 'Mr. X paused for a moment before continuing,' just to keep my character all the while well in the picture. . .

These of course are only two of the technical *trouvailles* that we made in labors that cannot have been exceeded by any two slaves that worked for ten years on the building of the Tower of Babel. We made an infinite number of others, covering an infinite field of human activities and reflections. You may find them valid as representing how life comes back to you and in that case they may help you, as writer, a little way along the long road that winds up hill all the way . . . All the way! For, for so long as you remain a live writer, you will forever be questioning and re-questioning and testing and re-testing the devices that you will have evolved. Or they may not at all fill your bill: in which case you must go forward alone and may a gentle breeze forever temper for you the ardor of the sun's rays!

But you must—there is no other method—pursue your investigation in that spirit of ours. You must have your eyes forever on your Reader. That alone constitutes. . . Technique!

THE CIRCUS

Katherine Anne Porter

THE LONG planks set on trestles rose one above the other to a monstrous height and stretched dizzyingly in a wide oval ring. They were packed with people—"lak fleas on a dog's ear," said Dicey, holding Miranda's hand firmly and looking about her with disapproval. The white billows of enormous canvas sagged overhead, held up by three poles set evenly apart down the center. The family, when seated, occupied almost a whole section on one level.

On one side of them in a long row sat Father, sister Maria, brother Paul, Grandmother; great-aunt Keziah, cousin Keziah, and second-cousin Keziah, who had just come down from Kentucky on a visit; uncle Charles Breaux, cousin Charles Breaux, and aunt Marie-Anne Breaux. On the other side sat small cousin Lucie Breaux, big cousin Paul Gay, great-aunt Sally Gay (who took snuff and was therefore a disgrace to the family); two strange, extremely handsome young men who might be cousins but who were certainly in love with cousin Miranda Gay; and Cousin Miranda Gay herself, a most dashing young lady with crisp silk skirts, a half dozen of them at once, a lovely perfume and wonderful black curly hair above enormous wild grey eyes, "like a colt's," Father said. Miranda hoped to be exactly like her when she grew up. Hanging to Dicey's arm she leaned out and waved to Cousin Miranda, who waved back smiling, and the strange young men waved to her also. Miranda was most fearfully excited. It was her first circus; it might also be her last because the whole family had com-

bined to persuade Grandmother to allow her to come with them. "Very well, this once," Grandmother said, "since it's a family reunion."

This once! This once! She could not look hard enough at everything. She even peeped down between the wide crevices of the piled-up plank seats, where she was astonished to see odd-looking, roughly dressed little boys peeping up from the dust below. They were squatted in little heaps, staring up quietly. She looked squarely into the eyes of one, who returned her a look so peculiar she gazed and gazed, trying to understand it. It was a bold, grinning stare without any kind of friendliness in it. He was a thin, dirty little boy with a floppy old checkerboard cap pulled over crumpled red ears and dust-colored hair. As she gazed he nudged the little boy next to him, whispered, and the second little boy caught her eye. This was too much. Miranda pulled Dicey's sleeve. "Dicey, what are those little boys doing down there?" "Down where?" asked Dicey, but she seemed to know already, for she bent over and looked through the crevice, drew her knees together and her skirts around her, and said severely: "You just mind yo' own business and stop throwin' yo' legs around that way. Don't you pay any mind. Plenty o' monkeys right here in the show widout you studyin dat kind."

An enormous brass band seemed to explode right at Miranda's ear. She jumped, quivered, thrilled blindly and almost forgot to breathe as sound and color and smell rushed together and poured through her skin and hair and beat in her head and hands and feet and pit of her stomach. "Oh," she called out in her panic, closing her eyes and seizing Dicey's hand hard. The flaring lights burned through her lids, a roar of laughter like rage drowned out the steady raging of the drums and horns. She opened her eyes. . . A creature in a blousy white overall with ruffles at the neck and ankles, with bone-white skull and chalk-white face, with tufted eyebrows far apart in the middle of his forehead, the lids in a black sharp angle, a long scarlet mouth stretching back into sunken cheeks, turned up at the corners in a perpetual bitter grimace of pain, astonishment, not smiling, pranced along a wire stretched down the center of the ring, balancing a long thin pole with little wheels at either end. Miranda thought at first he was walking on air, or flying, and this did not surprise her; but when she saw the wire, she was terrified. High above their heads the inhuman figure pranced.

spinning the little wheels. He paused, slipped, the flapping white leg waved in space; he staggered, wobbled, slipped sidewise, plunged, and caught the wire with frantic knee, hanging there upside down, the other leg waving like a feeler above his head; slipped once more, caught by one frenzied heel, and swung back and forth like a scarf . . . The crowd roared with savage delight, shrieks of dreadful laughter like devils in delicious torment . . . Miranda shrieked too, with real pain, clutching at her stomach with her knees drawn up . . . The man on the wire, hanging by his foot, turned his head like a seal from side to side and blew sneering kisses from his cruel mouth. Then Miranda covered her eyes and screamed, the tears pouring over her cheeks and chin.

"Take her home," said her father, "get her out of here at once," but the laughter was not wiped from his face. He merely glanced at her and back to the ring. "Take her away, Dicey," called the Grandmother, from under her half-raised crepe veil. Dicey, rebelliously, very slowly, without taking her gaze from the white figure swaying on the wire, rose, seized the limp, suffering bundle, prodded and lumped her way over knees and feet, through the crowd, down the levels of the scaffolding, across a space of sandy tan-bark, out through a flap in the tent. Miranda was crying steadily with an occasional hiccough. A dwarf was standing in the entrance, wearing a little wooly beard, a pointed cap, tight red breeches, long shoes with turned-up toes. He carried a thin white wand. Miranda almost touched him before she saw him, her distorted face with its open mouth and glistening tears almost level with his. He leaned forward and peered at her with kind, not-human golden eyes, like a near-sighted dog: then made a horrid grimace at her, imitating her own face. Miranda struck at him in sheer ill temper, screaming. Dicey drew her away quickly, but not before Miranda had seen in his face, suddenly, a look of haughty, remote displeasure, a true grown-up look. She knew it well. It chilled her with a new kind of fear: she had not believed he was really human.

"Raincheck, get your raincheck!" said a very disagreeable looking fellow as they passed. Dicey turned toward him almost in tears herself. "Mister, caint you see I won't be able to git back? I got this young un to see to . . . What good dat lil piece of paper goin to do *me*?" All the way home she was cross, and grumbled under her breath: little ole meany . . . little ole

scare-cat . . . gret big baby . . . never go no where . . . never see nothin . . . come on here now, hurry up—always ruinin everything for othah folks . . . won't let anybody rest a minute, won't let anybody have any good times . . . come on here now, you wanted to go home and you're going there . . . snatching Miranda along, vicious but cautious, careful not to cross the line where Miranda could say outright: "Dicey did this or said this to me . . ." Dicey was allowed a certain freedom up to a point.

The family trooped into the house just before dark and scattered out all over it. From every room came the sound of chatter and laughter. The other children told Miranda what she had missed: wonderful little ponies with plumes and bells on their bridles, ridden by darling little monkeys in velvet jackets and peaked hats . . . trained white goats that danced . . . a baby elephant that crossed his front feet and leaned against his cage and opened his mouth to be fed, *such* a baby! . . . more clowns, funnier than the first one even . . . beautiful ladies with bright yellow hair, wearing white silk tights with red satin sashes had performed on white trapezes; they also had hung by their toes, but how gracefully, like flying birds! Huge white horses had lolloped around and round the ring with men and women dancing on their backs! One man had swung by his teeth from the top of the tent and another had put his head in a lion's mouth. Ah, what she had not missed! Everybody had been enjoying themselves while she was missing her first big circus and spoiling the day for Dicey. Poor Dicey. Poor dear Dicey. The other children who hadn't thought of Dicey until that moment, mourned over her with sad mouths, their malicious eyes watching Miranda squirm. Dicey had been looking forward for weeks to this day! And then Miranda must get scared—"Can you *imagine* being afraid of that funny old clown?" each one asked the other, and then they smiled pityingly on Miranda. . .

Then too, it had been a very important occasion in another way: it was the first time Grandmother had ever allowed herself to be persuaded to go to the circus. One could not gather, from her rather generalized opinions, whether there had been no circuses when she was young, or there had been and it was not proper to see them. At any rate for her usual sound reasons, Grandmother had never approved of circuses, and though she would not deny she had been amused somewhat, still there had been sights and sounds in this one which she maintained were, to say the least, not particularly

edifying to the young. Her son Harry, who came in while the children made an early supper, looked at their illuminated faces, all the brother and sisters and visiting cousins, and said, "This basket of young doesn't seem to be much damaged." His mother said, "The fruits of their present are in a future so far off, neither of us may live to know whether harm has been done or not. That is the trouble," and she went on ladling out hot milk to pour over their buttered toast. Miranda was sitting silent, her underlip drooping. Her father smiled at her. "You missed it, Baby," he said softly, "and what good did that do you?"

Miranda burst again into tears: had to be taken away at last, and her supper was brought up to her. Dicey was exasperated and silent. Miranda could not eat. She tried, as if she were really remembering them, to think of the beautiful wild beings in white satin and spangles and red sashes who danced and frolicked on the trapezes; of the sweet little furry ponies and the lovely pet monkeys in their comical clothes. She fell asleep, and her invented memories gave way before her real ones, the bitter terrified face of the man in blowsy white falling to his death—ah, the cruel joke!—and the terrible grimace of the unsmiling dwarf. She screamed in her sleep and sat up crying for deliverance from her torments.

Dicey came, her cross, sleepy eyes half-closed, her big dark mouth pouted, thumping the floor with her thick bare feet. "I *swear*," she said, in a violent hoarse whisper. "What the matter with you? You need a good spankin, I *swear!* Wakin everybody up like this. . ."

Miranda was completely subjugated by her fears. She had a way of answering Dicey back. She would say, "Oh, hush up, Dicey." Or she would say, "I don't have to mind *you*. I don't have to mind anybody but my grandmother," which was provokingly true. And she would say, "You don't know what you're talking about." The day just past had changed that. Miranda sincerely did not want anybody, not even Dicey, to be cross with her. Ordinarily she did not care how cross she made the harassed adults around her. Now if Dicey must be cross, she still did not really care, if only Dicey might not turn out the lights and leave her to the fathomless terrors of the darkness where sleep could overtake her once more. She hugged Dicey with both arms, crying, "Don't, don't leave me. *Don't* be so angry! I c-c-can't b-bear it!"

Dicey lay down beside her with a long moaning sigh, which meant that she was collecting her patience and making up her mind to remember that she was a Christian and must bear her cross. "Now you go to sleep," she said, in her usual warm being-good voice. "Now you jes' shut yo eyes and go to sleep. I ain't going to leave you. Dicey ain't mad at nobody . . . *no*body in the whole worl' . . ."

IS AGRARIANISM FOR FARMERS?

Rupert B. Vance

FOR MANY the agrarianism of *I'll Take My Stand* afforded more of controversy than of exposition, and for a while it appeared that the brilliant group centering at Nashville were to be known by what they opposed rather than by what they advocated. Agrarianism, we were told, was a movement against mediocrity in art and letters, against American nationalism, against communism, against southern liberalism, against the tariff, against farmers' keeping books, against Yankees, and against the Juggernaut, the last being the outcome of the Civil War. Now this, no doubt, is a fine list of things to be against except that it appeared to leave the agrarians only one thing to be for —notably the ante-bellum southern planter. "The South, it appears," a caustic friend wrote me in those early days, "is to have its Ghandi—not one but twelve. And the alternative they offer to industrialism is much more glamorous than the spinning wheel—nothing less than an antebellum colonial mansion." Howard W. Odum has phrased it more wisely: "If the Old South were what we know it was not; and if we could go back, as we know we cannot—would it not be a relief from the maladjustments of an industrial society?"

The maladjustments have accumulated, but overnight the call to defend the rural South against the onrush of factories and payrolls became a work of supererogation. With the retreat from industry no longer a choice but a necessity, agrarianism now has the chance to tell us what it stands for, rather than what it is against. It is as though the leaders of a rear guard

action were suddenly offered command of the country from which they had prepared to flee. Today the agrarians are hearing less about the futility of tilting at windmills and of trying to turn back the clock. They are, in fact, being asked for programs. It needs only that they abandon a somewhat gratuitous defense of Jefferson Davis for the agrarians to change from nineteenth century romanticism to twentieth century regional planning.

The time is past when the needs of a great region can be served by a historical legend, no matter how lovingly fashioned. Nostalgia must become program, and this program if it is to seek national acceptance, owes the duty of candor—a candor which shall conceal no bias of race or class. This, it seems to me, is the significance of Mr. Cauley's book;[1] it marks the transition from a literary movement to agricultural economics. Nor should this come as a surprise to those who have followed the pages of the *American Review*.

I

It is not the purpose of this paper to discuss agrarianism as a theory of art, or as the defense of a tradition. As a philosophy of American history it has a good lineage all the way from Jefferson, who spoke of those that labor in the earth as the chosen people of God in comparison with urban mobs, down to Ben Tillman, who spoke of the textile mill workers of his state quite simply and feverently as "the damn factory class." As a movement it is entirely possible that agrarianism has claimed too much. It has, rightly no doubt, looked askance at economic materialism; and yet in realms of art and the spirit it has somehow assumed that once a section accepted an agricultural mode of life, all things would be added unto it.

Agrarianism can, no doubt, strengthen its defenses by consolidating its position. An examination of what comprises a feasible program for agrarianism may offer some suggestion as to what territory may be claimed and what should be abandoned by the movement. To hold, for example, that the choice is between agrarianism and industrialism is to claim too much. No one doubts that both will continue, and the best that agrarianism can expect here is a decreasing rate of industrialism. If the benefits of technology can not be made available to mankind under capitalism as we

[1] Troy J. Cauley, *Agrarianism: A Program for Farmers.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1935. Both this volume and its relation to the Nashville group are deserving of review on their own account—a task not here attempted.

know it, they will be conserved under some more collective system. There is now no turning back from industrialism; there is only the hope that the agrarian section of society can be saved from exploitation at the hand of the industrial sector.

Similarly Mr. Cauley, it seems to me, claims too much when after defining Agrarianism as "an economic system in which agriculture is the chief but not the sole means of making a living, and in which people generally own sufficient property to insure them a decent living and the basis for a satisfying degree of economic freedom" he holds that "as against both Capitalism and Socialism—twin products of highly-developed machine production—Agrarianism is a third possibility." One may accept his definition and yet find it impossible to believe that men will to any great extent give up machine production. Rather, if capitalism fails to give mankind the abundance of goods they need, they will give up the price system and keep the machines. In any case industrialism will continue in all but the most backward countries, and agriculture will exist as an adjustment either to captialism or socialism. Nevertheless, there exists some justification for the impulsive distrust of the socialist state shown by the agrarians. Certainly both Marxist theory and Soviet practice seem to indicate that, failing the introduction of the factory on the farm, that is, the mechanization and collectivization of agriculture in mono-culture, the Socialists would subordinate the farm population to the urban proletariat.

Because of Capitalism's partial adherence to private property and individual autonomy, the agrarian masses may be expected to retain their traditional allegiance to the system, provided it can supply them with cheap and adequate manufacturers' goods. Mr. Cauley and the agrarians generally propose to get around this need by reducing human wants to a minimum level. For the rest they are content to refer to manufactured products somewhat emotionally as gadgets with the implication that men use them largely because they are suggestible to advertising. The one answer to this is that lacking the gadgets of water at the tap and electricity in the home, the farm wife becomes a water-pumping, diaper-washing gadget herself. Peasants the world over have through necessity taken a somewhat calloused attitude toward the drudgery and child-bearing activities of their women. For their next symposium, let us hope the agrarians will invite a hard-

bitten farm wife to cast a cold and fishy eye on their proposals for diminishing the sum total of human wants.

If, to reverse the dialectic, agrarianism is not to be regarded as an ambitious theory of the "liquidation" of industrialism in a capitalistic crisis, precisely then what is left? The answer is that agrarianism remains a theory of agriculture, the advocacy of non-commercial or partly commercial as against commercial farming. The point should be made clear that agrarianism is not the theory that everybody should become farmers; it is rather the theory that farmers should farm for a living rather than for a profit in the price system. From the viewpoint of agrarianism for farmers we may well glance at the problems in the South (1) affecting future population trends, (2) capitalistic farming in relation to mechanization and the growing distinction between the Southeast and Southwest, (3) the problem of tenancy, and (4) the present crisis in the South.

II

First, we realize that the capacious maw of industrialism has until recently relieved agrarianism of the necessity of facing one of its most difficult problems—that of population increases. The depression on the one hand has effectively halted the southward movement of industry, on the other it has reversed the urban, industrial, and northward migration of the South's rural population. When we realize that the South, irrespective of the Negro, has the country's youngest population with the highest ratio of persons in the reproductive period of life, the country's highest birth rate, and the highest proportion of children to child-bearing women, this seems a Pyrrhic victory for Agrarianism. Moreover, some one and a quarter million souls have returned to the Cotton Belt, displaced by failing industrial production.

What this means is suggested by an estimate of the National Resources Board. With migration blocked and present population trends projected, by 1960 the rural population of eleven southeastern states will be increased over nine million with Texas and Oklahoma accounting for another two and three-quarters million increase. If migration continued at the 1920-30 rate, the increase would be only some two and one-fourth million for all the states mentioned. No one expects the urban migration to cease entirely but on the contrary no one expects it to resume at the rate set by Coolidge prosperity.

The South's farms have long furnished a reserve army of unskilled labor. This army, industrialism for a long time now will decline to receive, except in decreasing numbers. Its members are thus thrown back on the farm. Farms are already too small in the South and the ratio of tenancy is far too high. Yet it is true that if peasant proprietorship on optimum size farms could be established by fiat, present population trends would eventuate in the subdivision of holding and the recruiting of new armies of tenants from the too numerous sons of farm owners.

The demand, then, is for a population policy for agrarianism. Pressing on the capacity of westward migration, of the South's uncleared lands, and of urban industry to absorb their population increases, Southern farmers may well take a look at the French peasant. To this peasant his farm is a permanent thing to be tended with loving care and handed down undivided. As a result his family affairs are the despair of the French militarists. He hopes to rear to adulthood two children, preferably one son who will inherit the family domain and one daughter who will marry a neighbor's son who will also inherit. In such a stable order he hopes that no child of his will have to till another's land nor seek his fortune in that wicked Paris.

Here is the challenge to agrarianism. Non-commercial farming is more devoted to conserving the integrity of population on the land than to the increase of efficiency for the profit of the few to the displacement of the many. Nevertheless, to avoid the trend of subdividing farms and taking up poorer lands, the size of the farm family needs to fall more in accordance with the number that industry and agriculture will decently absorb. Otherwise agriculture will continue to thrust its population increases on the bargain counter of a heedless industrialism.

III

The orthodox view of agriculture as a commercial enterprise may be presented as follows:

The farmer is nothing more nor less than a business man in command of land and capital. As such, it is his function to specialize his crops and mechanize his methods so as to increase his production and cut his costs. He can best do this by engaging in mono-culture, the production of one staple cash crop. In the meantime he can add to his success by judiciously anticipating the rise in land values, thus reaping his share of the unearned

increment. To secure these laudable aims the farmer should place a mortgage on his land since this discounts the future and places him in command of more capital to expand production and increase efficiency. True, he will encounter the vicissitudes of the price cycle; but lowered prices may be met by increased efficiency, and the way to increased efficiency is by way of increased production per unit of overhead, the overhead consisting of said mortgage and said machinery. This procedure, it is very likely, leads to increased size of farms, and increased amount of wage or cropper labor.

At this point the reader may refuse to be taken in and arise to inquire as to whether the author is presenting a travesty of the old doctrine of "buy more land and grow more cotton to buy more Negroes, to grow more cotton to buy more land. . ." and so on *ad infinitum*. It is of course the orthodox economist's picture of economic man farming for profit in the price system. The picture, however, must be finished. Soon agricultural surpluses mount, price levels fall, the machinery and the mortgage remain to be paid for on the old level, and increased production even with the aid of increased efficiency soon lands the farm and the farmer in the hands of his creditors. Mr. Cauley phrases this matter very neatly when he says: "As a producer of goods agriculture in this country may be accounted a success; but as a business it is a distinct failure, and to a very large extent, its success in production is responsible for its failure as a business."

If agriculture is in the way of being a good provider but a poor bargainer, then agriculture must provide more for itself and less for those with whom it must bargain. This is not the denial of the economy of abundance; it simply holds that abundance like charity begins at home. It has proved much easier in our fluctuating price system to produce a steady flow of goods than a steady flow of income with which to purchase those goods or their equivalent. The general or all-round farmer is the only one of our artisans who can produce anywhere near the number and variety of goods sufficient for his own consumption. When in the interests of efficiency he concentrated on one staple crop, he threw away this immunity and became a business man subject to all the risks of the market. Such farmers enjoy none of the benefits of capital reserves or semi-monopoly and reduction of output found in industry, and like ripe plums are ready to be shaken down by the winds of depression and price failure. But wherever one finds farmers

who provide first for the family living, with a change of pace for whatever cash crops the market will absorb at decent prices, one finds survivors of price changes. To one who did not buy his farm on the last rise and has no intention of selling on the next, the changes in land values can not mean so much.

In its more sober tones the Land Planning Committee of the National Resources Board has endorsed such a national policy.

> Even if we were assured of opportunities of employing all the population that could be spared from agriculture, it seems probable that a middle course will be safer and perhaps socially more wholesome than an extreme form of commercial agriculture. The latter might imply, for instance, large capitalistic units dependent in part on hired labor and characterized by a high degree of economic instability. On the whole, it appears wiser to strive for the family farm characterized by a reasonable degree of self-sufficiency interrelated with forest, wildlife, and recreational resources of the countryside, and integrated as far as practicable with other forms of employment for family labor.

The advocates of agrarianism in all candor may set down their reactions toward increased mechanization as promised in the much discussed Rust Brothers cotton picker. One can see that cotton prices will fall, farms capitalized on the basis of previous returns will go on the block, and population will be thrust off the land; all with the end-result that fewer owners on larger holdings will for a time make bigger profits in commercial agriculture. The one admitted gain to society will be cheaper cotton goods—a gain for which society may have to pay in relief of the displaced and dispossessed farmers. This is the picture in the Southeast, much of whose topography is too rough for machine cultivation and harvesting.

But let us follow the changing picture in the Southwest. The great gains to be made in cotton production before the price finally reaches a level slightly above the cost of production, say six or four cents, will lead to a consolidation of farms in immense holdings. Capitalized on the basis of the first profits of mechanization, many farms thus purchased will not be able to sustain the early rate of return as cotton prices continue to fall before the spread of mechanization. The costs of expensive machinery and of land

bought on a speculative rise will leave the new cotton zones vulnerable to the next price recession. Combines and great wheat farms, as we know, failed to save the Wheat Belt. In addition occasional droughts in the Southwest may be expected to accelerate the rhythm of failure and bankruptcy. Yet all the while, farmers raising the family living and using family labor will continue to grow some cotton for cash income, and many of them will continue to survive the weeding-out process of price fluctuations.

It is significant to note that these conflicting views of commercial agriculture marked a geographical division of the specialists attending the Southern Regional Conference on the Cotton Economy at New Orleans in March of this year. Almost uniformly the representatives of the new Southwest area, Oklahoma and Texas, advocated specialized cash farming, mechanization and increased efficiency. They regarded tenancy as either a form of employing labor or as a stage in the climb to ownership, but in neither case an alarming social problem except possibly for mobility. Further rises might be expected in land values, and absentee landlords might still be expected to discount those values and pay prices higher than the present worth of the land, thus keeping them out of reach of the tenant-cultivator. The only urgent remedy needed at the present was to restore the export market, to lift restrictions on production and allow the inevitable march toward mechanization, efficiency, and large scale production to wipe out the submarginal producer. The only objection voiced to this program was that such submarginal farmers would never know when they were wiped out.

Against this partial view may be set the more balanced view of optimum regional production advocated by Howard W. Odum and others. The forthcoming Southern Regional Study, for example, points out that to satisfy the minimum dietary requirements for milk in the Southeast would require some 245 billion gallons, that the deficit is over one-tenth of the nation's production and involves a 192 *per cent* increase in the region's present production. Moreover, all down the line the region has failed to incorporate livestock in its agriculture. To make up one-half the area's deficiency in cattle would require four times the pasture now listed. To cite the principle of comparative advantage against the Southeast providing these things for itself is to ignore the costs of transportation and distribu-

tion. Then there remains the previous threat that the Southwest will undermine the region's cotton, the medium of exchange with which it secures its subminimum requirements. And then we are brought up short with the realization that no man can make the transition from growing products for sale to growing products for use unless he owns the land he farms. At least not in the share tenancy of the cotton system.

IV

Accordingly all who propose the South as the native haunt of agrarianism must face the conditions of tenancy in the region. Of all the characteristics of commercial farming, tenancy, it seems, is the most extreme; and of all the tenant areas the South is the most distressing in amount and kind. The system exacts its toll in cash crops and furnishes its tenants their family living, such as it is, at extortionate credit. It is noteworthy that the theories of tenancy so far developed in America are barely more than defenses of capitalistic agriculture. As such they are subject to the same cool scrutiny that agrarianism gives to commercial agriculture in general.

A dread of tenancy, as R. T. Ely points out, was brought from Europe by every stream of agrarian immigrants coming from semi-feudal backgrounds. The ideal of the American farmer cultivating an economic unit sufficient to maintain his family in comfort with no overlord governed the policy toward squatters, the passage of the Homestead Act of 1862, and various state "Homestead Acts" exempting the homestead, up to a certain value, from seizure for debt. Nevertheless, speculation and land grabbing introduced the elements of landlordism and the rapid increase of tenancy became apparent upon the disappearance of arable free land.

The first tenure census of 1880, showing over 25 *per cent* tenancy, brought dismay to those who believed that America would pass beyond the land tenure conditions of the Old World. Only gradually came the realization that, lacking an effective bar on speculation, land grabbing, and resale of homesteads, giving away government land could effect a wide distribution of farm ownership only as long as the supply of free land lasted. By 1930 about 53 *per cent* of the farmers operated leased land and 42 *per cent* rented all the land they tilled. No one, I suppose, now doubts that Federal long-time farm credits operated to aid the concentration of large holdings in commercial farming rather than to start tenants on the road

to ownership. "Negatively, it may be said," writes B. H. Hibbard, "that the land policies of the government have failed to keep the land permanently in the hands of the tiller of the soil." An interesting example of this is cited by Secretary Wallace in our Federal reclamation areas. These developments were urged as a means of creating new farms to be operated by owners, but the same failure to guard against land speculation and the absentee landlord has resulted in the fact that some 40 *per cent* of the projects are now operated by tenants.

Until recently in this country no critical theory of tenancy has been developed which takes into consideration the fact that while the United States is drifting into tenancy, certain European countries with semi-feudal backgrounds, notably Denmark, Ireland and France, have made the transitions to peasant proprietorship. The problem in America has been chiefly discussed either by Mid-Western economists to whom tenancy is an expression of capitalistic enterprise, or by Southern students with a definite racial bias, if not a predilection for the ante-bellum plantation. Of those acquainted with Mid-Western conditions, T. N. Carver may be taken as representing the orthodox point of view. Tenancy is related to the inefficiency of farmers. Thus owing to his greater efficiency, the able farmer achieves ownership while the inefficient is forced to become a tenant and farm under supervision. Possibly the most able attempt to rationalize the system is found in the agricultural ladder theory developed by W. J. Spillman. According to this theory the young and inexperienced farmer has to go through a series of progressive stages represented by the system of wage labor and tenancy in order to acquire the capital and experience necessary to farm ownership. Tenancy is thus a stage through which farmers climb rather than a status into which they fall. Spillman contends that the ladder strengthens the system of land-ownership. The ladder theory is sharply challenged by the fact that the percentage of tenants who are over 55 years old has been increasing for several decades. There are now about 375,000 who, as Secretary Wallace says, have struggled a lifetime toward ownership and in their old age possess no home of their own and no more security than when they started.

The whole trend of the Mid-Western school has been to minimize the extent and increase of tenancy in the United States and to point to the

South as a special case. As late as 1912 an able authority could write, "With the exception of the Negroes in the South there is no tenant class of farmers in the United States." With white tenancy increasing at a more rapid rate than Negro tenancy, and especially in consideration of its spread to the Southwestern cotton areas where few or no Negroes are found, this statement is now doubtful. Of the one and four-fifths million tenants found by the 1930 census in sixteen Southern states, over 60 *per cent* were white. The period from 1920 to 1930 demonstrated the devastation that could be wrought by a fall in prices in an area of commercial farming. Because of migration there was a slight decrease in Negro tenants, but an increase of 69 *per cent* in the number of white croppers in the area.

It is also customary to hold that the Southern share tenant, and especially the cropper, is an agricultural laborer given a fictitious dignity by being called a tenant. Such procedure dismisses the problem from the category of tenancy and thus no doubt, serves to make the tenant situation seem immeasurably brighter. This is but an example of the practice, to which social scientists at times have proved addicted, of solving problems by shifting categories. It is best answered by pointing out that tenancy at its worst has tended to degrade its workers to lower levels and to deny their rights as tenants. Tenants with a fluctuating status are the best proof of the seriousness of the problem. In many cases the plain truth is that they are regarded as tenants when that status is to the profit of the landowner and relegated to laborers when that status proves more profitable.

Another view often advanced holds that Southern tenancy is the normal development of the abolition of slavery and the break-up of the ante-bellum plantation. The shifting of former slaves into the metayer or share-cropping system was simply the method whereby large landholders made use of agricultural laborers lacking property in land, implements, and workstock. Moreover at this point the banker, the credit merchant and the farm mortgage companies crept in to furnish the credit needed and to dictate the type of agriculture to be practiced. This explanation is perfectly valid, but it should not be accepted as throwing the problem in any favorable light. Slavery, it must be remembered, had come to be regarded by the enlightened opinion of mankind as an abnormal industrial relationship. The concentration of large landholdings in the

plantation was undoubtedly bolstered by its existence, as it was by the speculative and land grabbing activities of the frontier. The persistence of the pattern after sixty years, is, therefore, no cause for congratulation even as it refers to the Negro farmer. To those who see tenancy as an ideal system, the problem must be regarded as even more disconcerting when it is realized that white tenants have entered the cotton system on even terms with the ex-slaves, have secured their family living in the same extortionate credit system, have exceeded them in number, have carried tenancy into the Southwestern areas where few Negroes are found. In the disastrous period 1920-1930 the evidence is unmistakable that when Negro tenants fled from the blighted cotton area to the refuge of northern industry, white tenants crept in to take their places. Racial inefficiency, and the shadows of slavery and the plantation here seem to explain too much or else nothing at all.

Behind the rallying defense of "Let the Negro problem alone" the South has let and has forced the nation to let tenancy alone, until now it sees fastened upon itself the incubus of a degraded white tenancy. Yearning for the symbol of the old plantation, fearing the Negro, and held in thrall by credit institutions that enforce the commercial agriculture from which they take their toll, the section has long stood in the shadow of *laissez-faire* as regards land tenure—so long in fact that it has almost rejected the hope of an independent free-holding yeomanry, living self-sufficient lives on family-sized farms, for the chimera of land concentration and the commercialized farming of the cotton system. In the Southeast the work of Carl C. Taylor, the late Eugene Cunningham Branson, and others, marks the turn toward a more realistic attitude toward tenancy.

V

There may be some viewing the spectacle of twelve cent cotton and government benefits all-around who have decided that the South need trouble itself no more about agricultural reform. But many discerning people in the South must feel: (1) That to reduce production reduces human labor; (2) that rental benefits go to landowners rather than to the masses of the rural population generally; (3) that instead, a larger number of the rural population goes on relief; (4) that these benefits are paid by consumers in higher prices of cotton textiles which are thus placed in a poorer

competitive position; (5) that pegging the price of raw cotton holds the umbrella over competing cotton areas, granting them a certain minimum price with no necessity of corresponding reduction in output; (7) that American exporters paying the pegged price cannot meet world cotton prices; (8) that our cotton export trade may be vanishing before our very eyes. Volumes could be written on these texts, but they are slowly emerging from the realm of controversy into the realm of fact.

And yet why should one blame the Federal government? With the best intentions in the world, it has ventured to underwrite the cotton economy, only to discover what an abysmal thing it is. With approximately one-eighth of the area's families on Federal relief, with two-fifths of the region's cotton lands rented by the government, and cotton prices pegged by government loans, does anyone think that the Federal agencies will soon be able to retire as guarantors of commercial agriculture in the South? Let us ignore for the time being the controversies now raging around the displacement of tenants, the shifting of tenants to casual labor, the question as to how large a *per cent* of the total cotton income, benefit payments have shifted from tenants to landlords. Nevertheless, the government has so deeply invaded the cotton system that it now can retreat with honor only by aiding in a reform of the system.

The way to this reform, now long overdue, is pointed out by the proposed Bankhead Bill to create a Tenant Farms Corporation. Some fifteen million acres of land, much of which is in the possession of Insurance Companies, Federal Land Banks and helpless owners, are estimated as available for settling tenants and share-croppers. The Corporation would start with $100,000,000 capital and the authority to issue a billion dollars worth of bonds. With efficiency and dispatch, it is hoped that within five years, 500,000 present farm families could be settled on their own lands. The farm would be about the size of the present tenant holding, graduated in accordance with the size of the family, and should cost from $2000 upward. With low interest and amortization charges the tenant might expect to gain possession of his farm with annual payments around $80 for some thirty years. The sum looms large in view of the fact that his cotton at present prices would bring only about $200 a year. Once settled on his farm he could be taught by county agents to grow a garden, keep pigs, pasture a cow and pro-

duce most of his own food. This would be clear gain, for in the commercial agriculture of the Cotton Belt the family living is purchased at extortionate rates of credit and paid for out of the cash returns from the cotton crop. Provided he gets good land, the tenant's annual payments will be much smaller than rent and credit charges exacted by landlord and time merchant. On the other hand, he will have to pay taxes and certain costs of production not usually charged against tenants. Here he has the advantage of cheap production credit, not available to tenants except where the landlord is willing to release his prior lien for the rent.

Difficulties remain which in all candor should be listed and faced by advocates of peasant proprietorship. First, the program, it will be recognized, is an attempt to escape some of the commitments of commercial agriculture. As such it is handicapped in the beginning by the fact that the purchasers are thrown back upon the money crop to meet annual payments. It will be recognized that the tenant must be allowed an equitable cotton or tobacco quota and that other crops and part-time employment should supplement his income. Even then, in order to carry through a desirable social policy, a realistic recognition of the relation between staple prices and the ability to keep up annual payments may be necessary. Second, the program must be guarded against the speculation and absentee ownership which have thwarted similar movements. If the farm owner cultivating his own farm is the goal, provision should be made that no purchaser can sell or mortgage his farm. If he wishes to relinquish his interest, the farm should revert to the corporation which can repay him a certain paid-up value and resell the farm to another tenant. Third, it should be realized that the very mould of his existence has made the tenant a creature of mobility and dependence. Every effort should be expended to encourage habits of stability while his need of dependence may be met by short-time farm credits and the supervision afforded by farm and home demonstration agents.

VI

The savor of sweet reasonableness that hovers about this proposal will not lead those who know the divided councils of the South to expect its easy acceptance. Certainly many Southerners who see no further than the interests of the credit institutions and large landholders which cluster about

commercial farming may be expected to prate of "excursions into state socialism," "government extravagance," and "meddling with the South's peculiar institutions." Accepted before the country as representatives of, as well as experts on, the ill-understood cotton economy, no one doubts they have the power to block this measure.[1] If they choose they may fiddle the familiar string while the nation continues to pay rents to planters, processing taxes to the AAA, and relief to dispossessed tenants and laborers. And while the money rolls down the gutter to no permanent good, the cotton picker, sweeping across the level plains of the Southwest, may so wreck the commercial agriculture of the Southeast as to leave the landed interests demanding of their government the assistance they once denied.

The agrarians, one feels, are in process of unifying themselves around peasant proprietorship as a standard of economic minima for the region. Yet one runs across writers in a recent issue of the *American Review* who list attempts at land tenure reform as the Fourth Crusade against the South, following the Third Crusade against Scottsboro, and lay the conspiracy at the door of the tribe of sociologists who are now to assume a place in Beelzebub's hierarchy directly across from the Abolitionists. Mr. Cauley, I fear, will find himself consigned to this devil's group, for he expresses no flattering opinion of the place of tenancy in an agrarian order. Nor will he be alone. The Nashville agrarians are no mean warriors; they have, to my recollection, crossed steel with everything from Industrial Councils to the shades of Henry W. Grady and Walter Hines Page. Yet I venture it will be a new experience for some of the agrarians to find themselves accused of rushing pell-mell into the Fourth Crusade against the South. Manifestly there do exist class interests in the South, nor are all the foes to sweet reasonableness to be found among the Yankees.

No one believes that the success of the movement toward peasant proprietorship will equalize all the special disabilities of an agricultural section in an industrial nation. Manifestly it would not raise the new freeholders to unexampled levels of prosperity, restore export markets, nor equalize the tariff burden; but it should give the South a large group of sturdy inde-

[1] Since this was written the Bankhead Tenant Farm and Homes Bill has passed the Senate in amended form by a vote of 45 to 32.

pendent peasant proprietors, black and white. Then will agrarianism cease to be a foible of literary men and become possible for farmers. And at last the agrarians, it seems to me, will be free to take up their rightful task—the formulation of the cultural and social values of an agricultural people.

A MAN WHO THOUGHT

John Peale Bishop

They would come into our place coming up out of the subway—our store is at the entrance to the subway where the steps go down—on days like this when the heat is fierce, and they'd take their hats off and wipe the sweat out of the bands and say, "Well, is it hot enough for you?" and ask for whatever they smoked. And I'd give them their change and say, "Thank you, call again." Their voices were tired, like they had been down there too long. They would stand a minute, lighting up, or maybe just waiting in the store, not wanting to go out on the street, into the sun. The air was shaking on the pavement, the heat was so bright. They'd stand there a while and if I was alone they'd say to me, "It's not the heat, it's the humanity." Coming up out of the subway, I'd know what they mean.

I'm not so old. I know what you fellows think. You don't have to laugh. I'm not a drinking man, you can tell that, even I am here now. O, I used to have my times when I was young and we went out, all us young fellows, and stood up to the bar and had our fun. I could stand up to any of 'em and take my rounds. Though to tell you the truth, there was a fellow kicked me once, Red Guffy, and I've never forgot it. Well, what of it? I'm forty-four and having a night out. A couple of good ones in me. But I'm not drunk. I'm just drinking.

I know what you'll say: I run into a little fellow, sitting by himself, and then he got started talking. He wasn't anything, I could have twisted him round my finger. I know what you'll say. But I killed her. I'm sitting here

with my feet on a chair, drinking gin, as cocky as you please. She's dead. Go on and say something. Laugh! I'm just humanity. I know. Not so hot! I'm the kind of man you see in the subway, you can see 'em like me any day coming in and going out. But you don't see me.

I walk to work and always have. Why, I says, should a man live in the Bronx and work in Yorkville? Not me. Where I work, that's where I'm going to sleep. There's no sense to it any other way. That's the way I am. I try to figure out what's the sensible thing to do, then I do it.

We had a nice place over on Third Avenue. I'm there now, but then with my wife we had an apartment in a fine old brownstone front. Of course, the elevated's there and the tracks ran right under the bedroom window. But the rent was low and it was real nice and convenient. Mary Lou liked it.

I guess a lot of people would have got used to the noise. But then some people can get used to anything. I never could.

I guess that was what bothered me, not the noise of the trains, but being there. I was a man who had to stay there. I'd lay there, night after night, just not sleeping. I'd hear it when it was first a whiny singing of the structure when the train's way down town. I'd lay there trying to pick out the different noises, I couldn't help it, the wheels, and the racketing over joints in the rails and then the grinding shriek when the brakes go on. The station was two blocks away. But I'd hear it. I'd lay there. And I'd think if I was what I ought to be I wouldn't be there, I'd be another man.

In summer it's worst. Because then the Ell gets a rusty sound. The tracks creak like junk iron when it's hot, the wheels grind and your nerves come out like sweat on your skin. Everything feels like it's falling to pieces and the cars rattling apart.

That's how it was. I couldn't stop. It was there, we were living on Third Avenue, I don't know how it first come to me, but it was there in the bedroom on the front of the house, and the Ell on a level with the room, trembling the floor and the lights and shadows of the trains striping the blinds.

I could see from the bed. And if I set up and held myself by the pillow there was the street lamp on the sill. It wasn't dark in that bedroom. It wasn't ever dark. There was a light always from the street and where it looked dark were things like tables and chairs.

She was asleep. I was alone. I lay there beside her, waiting for a breath in the dark. The sheets got sticky and wrapped me round and when the bed was hot it was so narrow I had to lay over with one leg out on the floor. Then it was late. And I'd be still waiting for the wind to change, the way a man might what was shut up in a box wait for somebody who was coming to take off the lid.

I'm trying to tell you how it was. It was there. I'm not a drinking man, but I'm having another gin. You have one on me. Because you know how to listen. I can see that. And I often think if they had listened to me back in the bar that night Red Guffy kicked me, I wouldn't be here.

Where was I? I know. We were living on Third Avenue. The covers were thrown back over the foot of the bed and she was sprawled out and her hair mussed around her face. I could see her when the cars passed. She was asleep. I sat up in bed. I saw what she was.

Once I was over by the East River down the bank where those big garages are. I used to walk at night to tire myself out before going home to sleep. I went in. There didn't seem to be nobody there. Maybe there was three or four mechanics there by the door, but they was talking and didn't pay any attention. I went on through. The cars were standing three deep, all black and shiny for the morning. I walked along looking at the cars. And there at the back was an old horse, standing on straw under an arclight. He was harnessed but not hitched to anything. It was like the wagon or whatever he'd been hitched to had gone up in air. He had that patient look old horses have, a tired look in his neck and his eyes. We looked at each other and it was like I'd never seen a horse before. Mister, I was brought up in the country, but until I saw that old sorrel with a white patch on his forehead, it was like I'd never even seen a horse before.

That night I could have killed her. She was just a body that was hot and breathed. We'd been married ten years. I saw what she was. Close, she was hot. I could hear her breathing. That was all.

At night I was a failure. I wasn't nothing. In the daytime I didn't feel that. I liked the store, I liked giving people service. But at night I heard the trains and knew I had no time. I would soon be forty, I hadn't done nothing nobody else could do.

All my life I had wanted to do something grand and tremendous, I didn't mind what it was, only afterwards I knew I would find everything different. Other people wouldn't have to know. But I could walk along the street and say, They don't know, but if they did they would all stop and stare at me. They would know I was a man who had done something not a one of them would have dared.

I got out of bed. She was still asleep. That was when I could have done it. I pulled the rocking-chair up before the window. If there was any breeze I would feel it there. I could see out across the tracks to where the windows were on the other side, some of them yellow still behind their blinds. No matter what time it is there's always somebody awake in New York.

But nobody would have seen me there. And when the trains came along past the window people would be sitting in the cars, beings drawn along I don't know where. But they were awful in that light, their skins white and dead. And I thought they are just sitting there with their eyes open, being drawn along, growing nails and hair, not doing anything else but what corpses do in the ground.

I looked over to the bed. She was there and I knew now what she was. I hated her because she was asleep. Then I knelt over her and when the lights passed I could see her face. The train went shaking the whole house, loud, and when it was gone I could hear my own heart beating. I was that scared.

I wanted to so hard I woke her up. I shook her. And when I saw her eyes open, then I could breathe. And I made her talk. It was just like the old Mary Lou. I felt her. I had to make her think that was why I waked her up. And what else could a man do?

I was fond of Mary Lou. I don't want you to think I wasn't. But we'd been married a good while and there comes a time when you aren't in love any more. And the woman's left and she's disappointed. But what's the use? I'd have liked to be young myself. As the man says, you can't change the date by tearing up the calendar.

You can see how it was. It was only because she was asleep I hated her. I would lay awake hating her, because she was just a body that was hot and breathed. That was one night. But there was lots of nights. Then it got so I would be ringing up a sale in the day on the cash register and I'd

hear the bell when it rang: *Now you know what you can do!* And I'd hand his change to the customer and say "Thank you, come again," and nobody would know. I was always one to read when I got the chance, but now soon as I got hold of the paper I'd turn right away to see if there was any murders in it. I'd skip the sporting pages and the comics and the editorials. Generally there was. And I'd say, "So that's how they done it." For there was two young fellows up in the Bronx and they was friends and one of them got the other to come to his bedroom. And he killed him. Then he put his friend's body under the single bed and pulled the counterpane down so it was hid on the floor. And while he waiting for a chance to get the corpse out he went off to the movies with a girl. And I thought there can't be so much to it if he can do that. But I knew there was.

I knew about Red Guffey and the night he kicked me on the shins that if only I had knocked him up against the bar I wouldn't have had something to regret all my life. But there it was. That was too late. This was all I had left. Because they could do anything they wanted to me afterward. But there was one thing couldn't nobody do. They couldn't laugh.

Let's have another gin. There's some things that's harder to do than you'd think, anyway in New York. You'd be surprised. Why, I recall one night I was out late in the street coming home. And as I was crossing Third Avenue I come on a drunk, down under the Ell, dirty and sad, and his shoes split, with his head propped against one of the girders. He dribbled loose from the lips. His eyes were puffed shut; he was dead passed out from smoke. And there he was where a car coming along would have cut off his leg. I lifted him. I could move his clothes, but the old drunk I couldn't budge. He lay there with his shins stuck out like a stiff's and bare where there weren't any socks to his shoes. I saw one of his legs all pitted with blue like gunpowder pocks. I shook him, I couldn't get him to move. And I was sorry for the poor old souse, I guess he needed all he could soak up not to be more miserable than he was. I didn't want him dead. I wanted to take him home and keep him till he could stand on his feet and be whatever he was. I swung his feet around out of the car-tracks. It was all I could do.

There's things it's awful hard to do in New York, especially when you're poor yourself and don't know how.

Because that's what it was. I never could see how I was going to get rid of the body. And that's all I really wanted to get rid of. I'd lay there in the hot nights and hate her because she was asleep and that's all she was.

But whenever I did it, I mean when I went over it in my mind and saw how it would be, there was always one thing: I was left alone with the body and that was what showed in that room where it was never quite dark. The street lamp was on the sill and on the bed that body. I was left alone like I had been so many nights before, standing, not sleeping at all; but standing there and that body on the bed and the night going by in the changing sounds until the last night taxi was gone with a lonely tired chug and the light still dark and rattle of morning when the garbage cans begin and the carts come banging them on the pavements and carrying away all yesterday's dirt. And I knew the way the dawn would come and day would look in through the window. Say, once back home, I saw an undertaker smile coming through a lace curtain.

I went through it so many times. But to tell you the truth, it was better now I had made up my mind. It's got to the place where a man can't hardly be a man unless he commits a crime. And that's the truth. And not just for me but for every man in the whole city.

I would stand there at night or prowl through that bedroom where it wasn't never dark. You wouldn't have thought I could do it, but when I saw her body there it was hot and breathing, and not the way I had seen it, cold and waiting for the daylight to come. What could I do? I was lonely and I had a torment on my mind. But when I woke her up, she never knew why I'd done it. That's something a woman never knows, why a man comes to them. It's not because he's in love or selfish or thinking only of his own time, but because he's lonely and can't stand being so alone. I wasn't young but there were nights that summer when it was almost like I'd been young and in bed with a strange woman that I talked to but wouldn't never know any more than you know them that way.

The fall came. It came when you thought summer was going to last forever, and you could see the difference in the way the men began to sit outside the stores along Second Avenue, on the doorstep, to get the last of the sun. I felt better and I thought maybe it would be better still if we went away. I don't mean really away, because I couldn't do that. But it was a

Sunday and we were in bed late and the window open and the air coming in and I thought, Well, there's one thing I can do and that's look at something green before it's gone for this year. And I said to Mary Lou, "Let's go to the country for the day." So we dressed and took our time, so that we could have a late breakfast at a restaurant at a table. I read my paper and took my time. Because something had come into my head.

We were going to the Bronx Zoo. We were on the uptown side of the Ell and had climbed the first stairs and were on the turn where the stairs go up to the Express trains and I was still looking at my paper when Mary Lou made me stop and look down. There was people, first running, then making a crowd down there on the street car tracks. And when I had paid both our fares and come out through the stile, then I found out what it was. A man had thrown himself in front of a down train and was dangling down there through the tracks. They said he had waited and let three or four trains go by. His train was still there and he was under it. I looked but I couldn't see nothing but the young motorman. He had curly black hair that was sweating all over his forehead with a frown so worried you could have cut it with a knife. I couldn't forget that frown. Our train came, I shoved Mary Lou in. It always upset her to see anything of the kind.

We walked around quite a while in the park and at last she calmed down and I tried to remember it was still green. The trees were dusty and dingy the way they are in September. There wasn't much to see. But there was a baby giraffe and we stopped there a long time, he was so slender and trembly on his legs and his mother, big and gawky, looking after him. His father had his head up at the top of the next cage and you couldn't help wondering how those giraffes could have made anything as fine and pretty as that little one. He already had a little knob on his head where the horns would grow.

We walked around all day and when we were going back I knew a shove would do it. We climbed slow up the Ell. We were both tired and then when we came out on the platform I was on the inside and she was against the tracks. And I knew when it came I wouldn't have to see it. Either they would take me away or I would get on the train quick and then step off again like I had been riding on it and hadn't known her or anything until the train stopped. I thought I could do that. But I let a crowded train go by and then before I could think another train was coming. We were close to the tracks.

And I was behind Mary Lou. She turned round and said something and I got ready watching the train. Then I saw the motorman's face, coming down on us, and his frown and I didn't pay any attention to what she was saying but kept edging nearer and then he was coming, that frown on his forehead. I wondered, Does he always frown like that? It was the same young fellow with the curly black wet hair. And then I couldn't. Because he was past us. The train stopped and we got in. I couldn't, because he'd had that happen to him once already that day and I couldn't help thinking they ought to have let him off and not made him drive again, not for a long time. We were in the car on the long seat. I was a murderer at heart, but I was thinking more about the young motorman than myself, and there we were, both of us, riding down town, Mary Lou and me, to have dinner in a restaurant.

Well, that was five years ago. And now I get this. It's summer now, like it was when we were living on Third Avenue and I couldn't sleep for the cars going by all night long. I still do. But look at it. It's a clipping from the paper in my home town. Mrs. Mary Lou Wigman, that's her. I don't know who sent it, but it's marked with a blue pencil, so I wouldn't miss it. I don't know how they got my address, but she's been back there four years, she must have told somebody. I always sent her money regular, so there wasn't anything she could hold against me, especially since she was the one wanted to leave. But then you never know. Once a woman's made up her mind she's got a grievance, she's harder'n hell to let go.

And it's just the same as if I did it. There was a long time I was meaning to do it. And now she's dead. She was crossing behind a street car and didn't look or something, and this taxi was coming at her, full tilt, and in trying to get out of its way she stepped right in front of the street car on the other track. They took her to the hospital. But before they got there she was dead.

She's dead. Of course, I wasn't there, I wasn't even in the town, but there it is. She's dead. They can't get me. But I know just as sure as I'm telling you I killed her. It was just that car took a long time, it took a long time to run over her. There's nothing to do about it, only I don't feel quite the way I thought I would. If you'd like another gin? Because I knew you wouldn't laugh.

POLITICAL RADICALISM IN FRANCE

R. K. Gooch

PROFESSOR JAMES HARVEY ROBINSON'S dictum concerning how little there is to choose between conservatives and radicals has, as the French say, *fait fortune*. He suggested, it will be remembered, that conservatives, who imagine that things will never change, are always wrong; whereas radicals, though they are also nearly always wrong, do "incur some slight risk" of being right in their guess as to "the direction of evolution."

This epigram doubtless contains a certain element of truth. Indeed, it may apply fairly well to a relatively long period marked by normal conditions. In such a period, as abundant experience makes manifest, organization of political parties tends to become relatively so rigid that basic principles and fundamental issues connected with the origin and tradition of the parties are in considerable measure obscured. When politics are characterized by this static condition, a certain cynicism is, perhaps, not unnatural. At all events, it is at such a time that epigrams concerning the difficulty of distinguishing parties appear likely to flourish. On the other hand, in more dynamic conditions, the situation is greatly different. Conservatives are wholly unable to feel confident that "things will never change"; and their position cannot be confined to advocating the *status quo* and to opposing proposed change. Still less, if at all, can liberals or radicals be dismissed from consideration with an easy generalization concerning their guesses at the probable future of change. From the nature of the case their pro-

posals for bringing about a better order of things form a focal point for controversy.

The future of American political liberalism is a question of exceeding importance and interest. In reality, that it is destined to have a significant future is by no means certain. The whole thing seems to depend on a successful combination of certain indispensable elements. In this context, keen attention ought to be directed at the experience of Great Britain and France, which, together with the United States, remain, albeit under no little pressure to give way, the only great democracies of the world. Just as, in the case of these two foreign countries, their experience with various elements of a liberal program for social justice is now several generations old and thus contains invaluable lessons for us in connection with the attempts that we shall inevitably make along similar lines; so the position of political liberalism and radicalism in the remaining great modern democracies is highly instructive. This is in a special sense true of France.

The Radical Party in France appears to possess a strong hold on a paramount position in the practical politics of that country. It displays a vitality and a vigour that are truly remarkable. Therefore, so far as political organization of liberalism is concerned, the Party offers an excellent object lesson, if not the best in existence, of the combination of forces apparently necessary for radicalism in contemporary politics to flourish. In this respect, the French Radical Party stands in striking contrast with the British Liberal Party which has apparently degenerated into a party top-heavy with able leaders of the old school of liberalism, ground to pieces between the upper and nether millstones of the Unionist and Labour Parties. The Radicals in France have managed to find a solution for the fusion of an older and a newer liberalism, of political liberalism and economic liberalism, of an agrarian liberal tradition and modern industrial liberal needs. No great perspicacity is required in order to observe that in the United States these elements have worked and do work frequently at cross-purposes. There is no wonder that persons high in authority in this country, as well as many observers less in the public eye, have recently been expressing the frank hope that a consolidation of liberal forces may soon be realized. It is especially in this connection that a study of French experi-

ence is full of instruction, though to point the moral at every step is both superfluous and pedantic.

II

When M. Poincaré formed in November of 1928 his so-called Armistice Government, it was the first French Government in thirty years which failed to include a single member of the Radical Party. Just a year later, it will be remembered, the President of the Radical Party, M. Daladier, was offered the premiership of France. This apparently lightning-like change in the political situation, of which numerous other examples might be cited, is the result of certain peculiar characteristics of practical politics in France; and it is one of the things which render French politics, for anyone who will trouble to look beneath the surface, intensely interesting.

In 1924, the Radical Party gave evidence of its extraordinary strength on the remarkable occasion when a President of the Republic was actually driven from office. At the time of this famous event, the Radicals showed in their struggle with M. Millerand the relentless treatment that they could mete out to anyone with the temerity to stand in their way. They were, of course, in a position to accomplish this and similar feats because they had at the beginning of 1924 led the successful campaign against M. Poincaré and against a foreign policy which had culminated in the Ruhr Expedition. What is of particular importance and interest to recall is that in 1926 M. Poincaré formed a Government supported by a Chamber that had been elected on a program precisely opposed to him. As a result, the predominant position of the Radical Party in the Chamber of 1924 to 1928 was, owing to financial crisis, materially altered.

When the elections of 1928 arrived, conditions were not propitious for an appeal to the people on normal political lines. These elections, it may be recalled, represented a sort of national vote of confidence in M. Poincaré and a sort of mandate for his coalition Government, formed in conditions resulting from "the crisis of the franc," to continue its work of restoring confidence. Incidentally, the character of the elections of 1928 caused the period between 1928 and 1932 to be one of considerable uncertainty and indefiniteness in which much difficulty attended all efforts to discover the line of political demarcation between majority and minority in the Chamber of Deputies. And yet, though these conditions caused the position of the

Radical Party in this Chamber to be less manifestly a dominant one, action by the Radicals was, during this period, in some ways even more significant. When they formed, through the self-imposed exclusion of their leaders from the Government, part of the minority, they consistently and persistently acted in opposition, repeating with relish the dictum that the business of an opposition is to oppose. They took the lead in laying low such important Governments as those of M. Briand and M. Tardieu. M. Herriot, probably the best known of the Radical leaders, asserted that this experience in opposition was extremely desirable as a "cure" for the Radicals. At the same time, the Party showed a great readiness to assume office. That M. Daladier in 1929 failed to form a Government is in a definite sense incidental. The same is true of other efforts, unsuccessful or barely successful, on the part of other Radicals to form ministries during the same period. What is of importance and of interest is that they were in a position to make these attempts. M. Tardieu taunted the Radicals during this period for a lack of respect for arithmetic; but they vigorously retorted with the assertion that to govern without the Radical Party, even if numerically practicable for a time, is psychologically impossible.

With the elections of 1932, the Radical Party returned, of course, to its normal position of essential dominance. Since then, it may be noted, history has repeated itself in a curious way. Just as the natural course of French politics that began after the elections of 1924 was interrupted two years later by financial crisis and the formation of a nonpartisan, coalition, national Government, so the elections of 1932 were followed in 1934, as is well known, by the critical events associated with the notorious Stavisky Affair and by the formation of the Doumergue Government.

Every reader of the newspapers will recall that M. Doumergue succeeded with very little delay in establishing for himself and his Government a position that appeared well-nigh impregnable. He seemed to possess the confidence and the support of the general body of the people. He was frequently asserted to be the last hope of France against violent upheaval. His fall, it was frequently stated, would be followed by catastrophe for one of the few great democracies remaining in the world. And yet, at the end of about nine months, he was overthrown without any untoward result. This extraordinary event was due primarily to the Radical Party.

The downfall of M. Doumergue, like several other of the most important political events in France during recent years, followed directly upon a decision of a Radical Party Congress. These annual national conventions of the Party, which represent a strikingly typical extra-legal growth in French parliamentary democracy, are momentous autumn events in the political life of the nation. Their deliberations and decisions are watched with interest by the country. If Radical Ministers hold, as they practically always do, important places in the Government, the position of the Government, is in a definite sense dependent upon action by the Congress; for the Radical Ministers, as leaders of a party that is most nearly typical of the democratic elements of France, cannot but be guided by decisions emanating from representatives fresh from the people. Even if Parliament remains in the later years of its term as representative of the French nation as at the time of election, the best representative of democratic France is almost certainly a Radical Party Congress.

III

According to the conventional accounts, the complexity of French politics and their difficulty for Americans are to be attributed to the existence in France of many parties and groups, instead of the familiar American two-party system. In reality, strictly speaking, the word *party* is in France correctly applied to political organizations in the country at large, whereas the word *group* refers properly to a number of members of one of the Chambers of Parliament loosely or closely bound together for certain political purposes. Unlike the situation in America, where, as is well known, political organization in the country and political association in legislatures correspond closely, such correspondence is in France the exception rather than the rule. Thus, there exist, of course, parties to which no groups correspond and groups to which there are no corresponding parties. In other words, there is, in general, no necessary connection between political organization in the country and political organization in Parliament. On the other hand, examination of French political parties cannot proceed without some reference to the situation in Parliament and, more especially, to one important piece of parliamentary terminology. The simple consideration of the physical position occupied by the several groups in the Chambers furnishes the basis for the far-reaching classification of parties in the country and of

their political tendencies as Right or Left. Incidentally, it is not without interest to recall that the terms Right and Left are apparently becoming well established in American usage, a development that seems to correspond to the recently awakened interest in politics in America and to the prophecies made and the hopes expressed that the fundamental distinction between conservatism and liberalism will soon fully manifest itself in this country.

The number of explanations for the basic distinction between conservatism and liberalism is legion. At the same time, these explanations usually explain little more than any dogmatic assertion of a fundamental "bisection of human nature" into more cautious and more adventurous elements. In reality, the distinction in its fundamental aspects is, perhaps, best viewed in terms of the true end of the state, whether this be considered, with Aristotle, "the good life," or, in the language of the Constitution of the United States, "to promote the general welfare," or some other concept. In this context, conservatives really differ from liberals in respect of the terms in which they conceive the good life or the general interest.

As James Madison said in the *Federalist*, the "most common and durable source" of basically divergent concepts of the good life is to be found in the "various and unequal distribution of property." This suggestion, which many people would probably associate more naturally with Marx than with the Father of the American Constitution, is reinforced in a striking way by the assertion in a succeeding sentence that "those who hold and those who are without property have ever formed distinct interests in society." If, then, we may accept what is said by Madison, the Right may be roughly defined as those who conceive that the general welfare is best furthered by attaching primary importance to the interest of the few who hold considerable property, and the Left as those who conceive that the general welfare is best furthered by attaching primary importance to the interest of the many who hold little or no property. This is no less applicable in France than elsewhere.

In France, the fundamental characteristics of the Right and the Left have, as in other countries, become overlaid with a large mass of connotations. These would seem in most cases to be the associations of various means employed at different times in history by the Right and the Left in

their efforts to give effect to their idea of the general interest. Thus, the very concepts of *conservation* and *liberation* are cases in point. Not unnaturally the means have tended to be confused with the end; for these means serve as much more simple and concrete standards of judgment and of classification. In this context, the suggestion has been made that the simplest test of the Right and Left in France is rejection or acceptance of the French Revolution. Thus, it is said, the Right ought to be thought of, in connection with the question of regime, as monarchial, the Left as republican. With respect to the two great forces, the physical and the spiritual, which form the basis of any regime in the state, the Right, according to the same view, ought to be thought of as supporting the Army and the Church, the Left as anti-militarist and anti-clerical. These ideas are indubitably helpful in gaining an understanding of the traditions of the Right and Left. They cannot, however, be accepted too literally, partly for the reason that certain questions, such for example as that of the regime, have with time largely ceased to be issues, and partly for the simple reason that the Right and Left have, at different times, changed and even exchanged their characteristic means.

Of the apparent inconsistencies, anomalies of terminology, and other vagaries which have crept into political thought because of confusion between means and end, those connected with the concepts of liberty and liberalism are undoubtedly the most striking. Though there appears to be no good reason why difficulty should exist in the matter, the simple fact that almost all contemporary political controversy in the United States is shot through with this confusion does not admit of doubt. In France, a thoughtful writer lamented more than a quarter of a century ago that the terms derived from the concept of liberty had been appropriated by the parties of reaction. The simple explanation of this phenomenon, which has by no means been confined to France and the United States, is based on the simple fact that the principal emphasis in the modern state has shifted from political to economic and social considerations.

The seventeenth and eighteenth century libertarian tradition, with its passionate attachment for a liberty regarded as absence of restraint and constraint of individuals at the hands of the state and with its sincere belief in a liberalism conceived as a preference for restricting state action within the narrowest possible sphere, was a tradition of the Left for the very prac-

tical reason that such liberty and liberalism were considered to be in the interest of the mass of the people. Liberty and liberalism were very valuable means, but none the less merely means, by which the welfare of the general body of the people could be served and could be defended against the interest of the privileged few who at the time possessed political power. This situation has been materially altered, whether or not we are willing to admit it, by changing economic and social conditions and by the development, largely *pari passu,* of political democracy. In more recent times, attempts by the Left to employ political power on behalf of the bulk of the people in respect of modern economic and social problems have not unnaturally turned conservatives into champions of liberty. In the first place, the privileged few are now alarmed, as was the body of people originally, at the employment of political power by others and in the interest of other than themselves. Likewise, the conservatives now understand clearly that a large modicum of political *laissez-faire* is in the interest of their economic and social privileges. Finally, and perhaps more important, the Right naturally finds it expedient to confuse means and end, that is to say, to identify liberty, and its emotional appeal and its traditional associations, with their concept of the general welfare. Hence, the French view that parties of the Left and Right are to be distinguished by their attitude towards the French Revolution must be supplemented, just as the whole situation is complicated, by the consideration that the division likewise depends on the attitude of parties towards the Industrial Revolution.

IV

The Radical Party is the principal party of the Left in France. M. André Siegfried suggests that it is "perhaps the most typically French of all the parties" and, in the biblical sense, the " 'salt' of the Left." In other words, since the Left is characterized by the belief that the general welfare is best served through a primary regard for the interests of the many who possess little or no property, the Radical Party, though there are, of course, other parties of the Left, represents in a definite sense the mass of the French people. It is, to quote M. Siegfried again, "as by instinct" for everything that is '*petit*' and against everything that is '*gros*.' The people of whom the party is representative do not always vote for the candidates of the Radical Party, it is true; but this is often to be explained by the well known fact that

in several regions of France the voters consider it "advanced" to vote for the candidate standing furthest to the Left. In the result, though this is not the only reason involved, the Radicals are opposed not only by their natural enemies, the Right, but also frequently by those who are further Left. This is the universal experience of liberalism. In France, the Radicals, champions of the true liberal tradition, owe their predominant position to the fact that they have so far survived this double cross-fire.

A foreign observer who reads the French newspapers cannot fail to be struck by the fact that radicalism in France is the almost constant object of peculiarly vigorous attack. Such an observer, when he has made full allowance for the diction and temper of partisan politics, will none the less recognize even in the journals of the Grand Press, including some of the best-known papers of the world, a relentlessness and a bitterness to which, unless he is a special student of the nature and history of liberalism, he is likely to be largely unaccustomed. Incidentally, there are some indications that a similar situation is developing in the United States. However that may be, a striking aspect of the matter in France is that there runs through all the scurrility and the ridicule and the irony and the rest of it a prediction of the final disintegration and death of the Radical Party. In reality, this is almost certainly an unintended but real tribute to the vitality of French radicalism, and, no doubt, of liberalism as such. Aside from the inconsistency of employing such strenuous force against a party alleged to be moribund, the fact that the same prediction of early death has been made for many years is calculated to leave detached observers somewhat skeptical. More interesting food for thought is to be found amongst the brilliant maxims of the author writing under the pseudonym of Alain, collected in the book, *Eléments d'une doctrine radicale,* which has been declared the greatest study of political psychology that has emanated from the Left. French radicalism, according to Alain, is not old, but still an infant; and what it will grow into is the only question, he asserts, that concerns a political situation about which everything has been said.

Criticism of radicalism from the Right and the far Left has borne fruit in interesting ways. For example, when M. Daladier became President of the Radical Rarty several years ago, he announced that his ambition was to be the president who should bring about the unification of the Party in

Parliament and in the country. M. Daladier has also been one of the leaders of the Party who have from time to time insisted on *programme d'abord* as the watchword of radicalism. This emphasis on unity and this insistence on a platform are answers to the unceasing series of leading articles which describe the Radicals as a heterogeneous group with no ideas, no unity, no program, no social conceptions, no force, and no cohesion. This criticism, however, aside from its manifest exaggeration, errs, as attacks on liberalism often do, in applying to a progressive party a conservative standard of judgment. If the paradox is too violent which has it that the discipline of the Radicals is to be found in their dispersion, there is a considerable measure of truth in one which sees the strength of the Party in its contradictory interests. Moreover, though it is true that the Radical Party has, from the nature of the liberal case, had no rigidly fixed policy or program, its strength as M. Georges Saurez once said, has in reality consisted in dogmatizing the policy of the moment.

The strength and vitality of French radicalism, therefore, are not to be attributed either to strict discipline or fixed platform. Efforts in those directions are, perhaps, best regarded rather as expedients of practical politics than as indications of the true nature and future of a principle. As a matter of fact, such efforts are manifestations, like many others that could be mentioned, of an authoritarian tendency in the Radical Party, which *Le Temps* has wittily denominated *boulangisme à pied*. This tendency, however, is not so much characteristic of radicalism as a result of a long lease on power by a party and of a determination to continue in the possession of power. The vitality of radicalism, as its history shows, involves more fundamental tendencies.

The very name in full of the Radical Party supplies a key to the position of French Radicalism. The "Republican Party of Radicals and Socialist-Radicals" faces in two directions. Historically, it inherits the more "advanced" of the two tendencies which have manifested themselves in French republicanism ever since monarchy became for practical puposes an impossibility in France. On this side, therefore, the Party is in the individualist tradition. It was closely associated with the founding and it furnishes a principal part of the membership of the *Ligues des droits de l'homme et du citoyen*. It remains instinctively hostile to the Church, the Army, and the

Bankers. In practice, the tendency of the Party on this side has been manifested not only in criticism, opposition, and destructive effort, but has been dogmatized into far-reaching policies of the moment and has been responsible for a large amount of France's most important laic and social legislation. In this way one set of roots is firmly planted in the historical sentiment of the mass of the French people.

On the other hand, such sentiment in France, as has been seen, leans constantly to the Left. Thus, French radicalism, as Waldeck-Rousseau subtly analyzed it more than thirty years ago, is always more advanced than opportunism. In practical politics, as has been suggested, radicals, whom Alain has defined as men with a secret tenderness for socialism, tend to vote for persons of "advanced" economic and social views. Here, indeed, the Party possesses a second source of vitality; for through its young and militant socialist-radical element, it constantly draws strength from further Left. The criticism of its opponents that its interest in practical working arrangements with the Socialists is greater than its regard for radicalism is in reality a recognition of a principal source of vigor. In 1885, some young leaders in Paris, so obscure that their names remain unknown, set up in the city flaming posters declaring that economic and social questions must come before those of a purely political nature; and radicalism acquired an invaluable addition. Indeed, it is this which prevents the Party from being ground to pieces by more vigorous forces on each side of it.

The fusion of radicalism and socialist-radicalism, therefore, has combined the individualist tradition with something new. This later element is not Marxist or collectivist, and does not advocate class warfare and revolution. However, it is not actively hostile to the advocates of such things; and preaching and practising "no enemies on the Left," it thereby benefits from a certain survival value of what it regards as mistaken sincerity. On the other hand, the adherence of the Party to the program of the General Confederation of Labor is only one of many indications of its distinct nisus towards nonviolent syndicalism; so that here again French radicalism is basically individualist. It appears to apprehend, vaguely and inarticulately often, that the cause of traditional individual freedom is, in its less spiritual aspects, destined to continue to wane in importance; that the future is to a corporative society, though not, of course, on the fascist

model; and that, to prevent socialization from becoming identical with centralization, the true champions of liberty will always be possessed of a cause in advocating the free-play of the parts of the whole, whether the part be the individual or the group. French radicalism may, indeed it certainly will, continue to fall into mistakes and inconsistencies; but so long as its basic causes are those of the moral worth and dignity of the individual and the freedom of natural organization, it may doubtless listen to its opponents unperturbed by their assertion that it is senile and moribund.

THE OLD WOMAN AND THE STATUE

Wallace Stevens

ANOTHER EVENING in another park,
A group of marble horses rose on wings
In the midst of a circle of trees, from which the leaves
Raced with the horses in bright hurricanes.

II

So much the sculptor had forseen: autumn,
The sky above the plaza widening
Before the horses, clouds of bronze imposed
On clouds of gold, and green engulfing bronze,
The marble leaping in the storms of light.
So much he had devised: white forelegs taut
To the muscles' very tip for the vivid plunge,
The heads held high and gathered in a ring
At the center of the mass, the haunches low,
Contorted, staggering from the thrust against
The ground as the bodies rose on feathery wings,
Clumped carvings, circular, like blunted fans,
Arranged for phantasy to form an edge
Of crisping light along the statue's rim.
More than his muddy hand was in the manes,
More than his mind in the wings. The rotten leaves
Swirled round them in immense autumnal sounds.

III

But her he had not forseen: the bitter mind
In a flapping cloak. She walked along the paths
Of the park with chalky brow scratched over black
And black by thought that could not understand
Or, if it understood, repressed itself
Without any pity in a somnolent dream.
The golden clouds that turned to bronze, the sounds
Descending, did not touch her eye and left
Her ear unmoved. She was that tortured one,
So destitute that nothing but herself
Remained and nothing of herself except
A fear too naked for her shadow's shape.
To search for accent all an afternoon
And without knowing, and then upon the wind
To hear the stroke of one's certain solitude,
What sound could comfort away the sudden sense?
What path could lead apart from what she was
And was to be? Could it happen to be this,
This atmosphere in which the horses rose,
This atmosphere in which her musty mind
Lay black and full of black misshapen? Wings
And light lay deeper for her than her sight.

IV

The mass of stone collapsed to marble hulk,
Stood stiffly, as if the black of what she thought
Conflicting with the moving colors there
Changed them, at last, to its triumphant hue,
Triumphant as that always upward wind
Blowing among the trees its meaningless sound.
The space above the trees might still be bright
Yet the light fell falsely on the marble skulls,
Manes matted of marble across the air, the light
Fell falsely on the matchless skeletons,

A change so felt, a fear in her so known,
Now felt, now known as this. The clouds of bronze
Slowly submerging in flatness disappeared.
If the sky that followed, smaller than the night,
Still eked out luminous wrinklings on the leaves,
Whitened, again, forms formless in the dark,
It was as if transparence touched her mind.
The statue stood in stars like water-spheres,
Washed over by their green, their flowing blue.
A mood that had become so fixed it was
A manner of the mind, a mind in a night
That was whatever the mind might make of it,
A night that was that mind so magnified
It lost the common shape of night and came
To be the sovereign shape in a world of shapes.
A woman walking in the autumn leaves,
Thinking of heaven and earth and of herself
And looking at the place in which she walked,
As a place in which each thing was motionless
Except the thing she felt but did not know.

V

Without her, evening like a budding yew
Would soon be brilliant, as it was, before
The harridan self and ever-maladive fate
Went crying their desolate syllables, before
Their voice and the voice of the tortured wind were one,
Each voice within the other, seeming one,
Crying against a need that pressed like cold,
Deadly and deep. It would become a yew
Grown great and grave beyond imagined trees,
Branching through heavens heavy with the sheen
And shadowy hanging of it, thick with stars
Of a lunar light, dark-belted sorcerers
Dazzling by simplest beams and soothly still,

The space beneath it still, a smooth domain,
Untroubled by suffering, which fate assigns
To the moment. There the horses would rise again,
Yet hardly to be seen and again the legs
Would flash in air, and the muscular bodies thrust
Hoofs grinding against the stubborn earth, until
The light wings lifted through the crystal space
Of night. How clearly that would be defined!

PRAYER FOR MERCY

(In Memoriam . . . July 5, 1934 . . . San Francisco)

Lincoln Fitzell

DARK GODDESS of the sickle shade between the shadow and the wall,
Sweet Death, now wrap them in your black and heavy shawl.
These hands are work-lined, fold them soft, in earth their tortured shapes conceal,
Calm, blameless Deity, deep now the rash, blind spirit heal.

O say that winter lies too long in white of hollow, clutch of snow,
Breathe, Death, more gently in your trade than now the gusty seasons blow.
These fell in toil and ask alone the long peace of a shadowed bed,
Receive their labors, Death, and sweet into their souls your slumber shed.

Pure guardian of unlived days between the weather and the sun,
Sweet Death, now raise from nettle ground these bodies wearied and undone.
To these who crumpled on their wounds be kind, Dark One, O wrap them well
In dusk no bullet-wage can pierce, for by such gratitude they fell.

ON A REPLICA OF THE PARTHENON AT NASHVILLE

Donald Davidson

WHY DO they come? What do they seek
Who build but never read their Greek?
The classic stillness of a pool
Beleaguered in its certitude
By aimless motors that can make
Only incertainty more sure;
And where the willows crowd the pure
Expanse of cloud and blue that stood
Around the gables Athens wrought
Shop-girls embrace a plaster thought,
And eye Poseidon's loins ungirt,
And never heed the brandished spear
Or feel the bright-eyed maiden's rage
Whose gaze the sparrows violate,
But the smoke drips its spectral dirt,
And gods like men to soot revert.
Gone is the mild, the serene air.
The golden years are come too late.
Pursue not wisdom or virtue here,
But what blind motion, what dim last
Regret of men who slew their past
Raised up this bribe against their fate.

TWO POEMS

Randall Jarrell

And did she dwell in innocence and joy,
Loved, cared-for, a happy child? Not only in the mind,
When, swollen and wicked, she forgot her state;
As though, condemned in an old time,

The guards, the dumb spinners bending to their yarn,
Were changed into the guardians of her thought,
And sat in meditation by time's formal stream,
Webbed, eloquent, and loving to their child;

But she must strangle in some hooded doom,
Sheet in vain rhetoric their reader names,
And, falling, lament the kingdom of the clouds,
And afterwards struggle blindly to regain

The most ignorant and most savage moment of her life.
Think her, even, the justification of her age,
Pitiful, full of virtue, contented, new,
Sent down the unpainted corridors of the blind:

And in the end she's undone by violence.
The night, a snow-owl bending from the north,
Horned, light-eyed, stooping to his prey
To beat her down with snowy wings,

Stands glaring by her twisted form
And rends her in that instant by the wall
Where she lay swept with dumb content.
She lived in splendor and in light;

And, if she died corrupted, in the world's end,
And that other, in misery and fantasy,
Satisfied her shaved and corrupt heart
With greed and longing, the empty clusters of delight,—

The world's evil? Stand there waxen in the snow,
Kind-hearted, ignorant, obstinate, secure; the
Child of the world. Can one show
The way of blessedness to the unsaved?

II

Looking back in my mind I can see
The white sun like a tin plate
Over the wooden turning of the weeds;
The street jerking— a wet swing—
To end by the wall the children sang.

The thin grass by the girls' door,
Trodden on, straggling, yellow and rotten,
And the gaunt field with its one tied cow—
Even now, the air seems to shake
With that violence, that senseless despair.

The rotting pumpkin under the stairs
Bundled with switches and the cold ashes
Still holds for me, sunken in its eyes,
Stuck over the candle's stiffening pool,
The stinking shapes of cranes and witches,

Their path slanting down the pumpkin's sky.
And even here, the patched comforter,
The white iron bed,—creak to me,
Their forms contorted, waiting, still,—
That world, silent, drowned in time,

Regret turning, Grief with its nails.

WITNESS OF LIGHT

R. P. Blackmur

SEE ALL we see
weakness and strength
without feud without faith
mirror the mystery
of light in the light

See all we see
horror in hope
torment in power
form without scope
faults for a tragedy
lightning in light

See all we see
boredom of lust
desiring desire
the terror of justice
resorting to fire

See all we see
the breath in its flight
the oppression of peace
and rape as release:
and rape as release:
false home in the night

Humbled from confusion
the cumulus words:

O charitable heart
see all we see
the witnessing art
light in the light.

THE LIGHT OF FEAR IN EXILE

Raymond Dannenbaum

THAT THE Lord brandished His hammer sceptre,
That He rose in righteous anger,
That He sang in voice of thunder
The vengeful threat,
Threat of destruction and brooding terror,
I have seen.

That the Lord watches with eyes eight billion light years wide,
And that they glance the radiant power which men mistake
As cosmic rays, I saw graved in three-color-process,
With "figures, facts, and some symbolic illustrations,"
As frieze inside a Market Street news-stand
Under the afternoon rain:
"If all the men of Earth at war had bled into His raging sea,
The red of them would pale against God's deep . . ."
Blood is too feeble and its vow mocks the vintner,
Wine is Christian-mild, pressed for evocation with a biscuit
In the cold tomb of a church winter—
For who are you to bespeak the God, summon His image to an
handful of gritty clay?

Of these am I so full afraid
That I have fled from Eden to America
Where Quetzalcoatl from the South
Has swayed the feather mantle of his reign.

DARK PASTORAL

I PLACED THE rusted thimble
Upon my index finger;
The needle pierced it through,
Into the bone.

I heard no sound but evening
Slipping through
The watercloset window
And spilling by the tub.

A curious spider left
His imprisoned fly,
Brushing nightmare fingers
Across invisible fetters.

Fear, like the hissing trambrake,
Shadowed the chandelier
And rustled the cords on
The window curtains.

Undismayed by the night,
Walking the horizon,
Christ and some disciples
Counted the loaves and the fishes.

QUEST

Where are those who went before us
Riding black horses, combed and shining,
With their armor newly polished,
Wearing the token, lance and sword?
And their brothers riding dapples,
Drawing carts with cannon?

Wounded and dying.

In the evening of December
You will find them waiting
In the pasture and wood,
Crushing the acorn underfoot,
Fed on phantom herbage,
Cropping silently as smoke.

LETTER FROM A COWARD TO A HERO

Robert Penn Warren

What did the day bring?
The sharp fragment,
The shard,
The promise half-meant,
The impaired thing,
At dusk the hard word,
Good action by good will marred...
All
In the trampled stall:

I think you deserved better;
Therefore I am writing you this letter.

The scenes of childhood were splendid,
And the light that there attended,
But is rescinded:
The cedar,
The lichened rocks,
The thicket where I saw the fox,
And where I swam, the river.
These things are hard
To reconstruct:
The word

Is memory's gelded usufruct.
But piety is simple
And should be ample.

Though late at night we have talked,
I cannot see what ways your feet in childhood walked.
In what purlieus was courage early caulked?

Guns blaze in autumn and
The quail falls and
Empires collide with a bang
That shakes the pictures where they hang
And democracy shows signs of dry rot
And Dives has and Lazarus not
And the time is out of joint:
But a good pointer holds the point
And is not gun-shy;
But I
Am gun-shy.

Though young, I do not like loud noise:
The sudden backfire,
The catcall of boys,
Drums beating for
The big war,
Or clocks that tick at night and will not stop.
If you should lose your compass and map
Or a mouse get in the wall,
For sleep try love or veronal,
Though some, I know, prefer philology.
Does the airman scream in the flaming trajectory?

You have been strong in love and hate.
Disaster owns less strength than you have got,
But he will cut across the back lot

To lurk and lie in wait.
Admired of children, gathered for their games,
Disaster, like the dandelion, blooms,
And the delicate film is fanned
To seed the shaven lawn.
Rarely, you've been unmanned;
I have not seen your courage put to pawn.

At the blind hour of unaimed grief,
Of addition and subtraction,
Of compromise,
Of the smoky lecher, the thief,
Of regretted action,
At the hour to close the eyes,
At the hour when lights go out in the houses. . .
Then wind rouses
The kildees from their sodden ground:
Their commentary is part of the wind's sound.
What is that other sound,
Surf or distant cannonade?
You are what you are without our aid.
No doubt, when corridors are dumb
And the bed is made,
It is your custom to recline,
Clutching between the forefinger and thumb
Honor, for death shy valentine.

RANSOM

Old houses and new-fangled violence:
Old bottles, but new wine, and newly spilled.
Doom has, we know, no shape but the shape of air.
That much for us the red-armed augurs spelled,
Or flights of fowl lost early in the long air.

The mentioned act: barbarous, bloody, extreme,
And fraught with bane. The actors: nameless and
With faces turned (I cannot make them out).
Christ bled, indeed, but after fasting and
Bad diet of the poor; wherefore thin blood came out.

What wars and lecheries! and the old zeal
Yet unfulfilled, unrarefied, unlaced.
At night the old man coughs: thus history
Strokes sum, ere dawn in rosy buskins laced
Delivers cool with dew the recent news-story.

Defeat is possible, and the stars rise.
Our courage needs, perhaps, new definition.
By night, my love, and noon, infirm of will
And young, we may endeavor definition;
Though frail as the claspèd dream beneath the blanket's wool.

ANCESTOR

George Marion O'Donnell

I SUMMON YOU tonight to smoky rooms,
Sole watcher with the metronome of time,
Your portrait flanked by candles and your books
Shelved as you left them and your letters here;

Outside the windows, strict the tortured bell
Chanting the formal litany of snow;
Black, rounded, humped, a race of monstrous dwarfs
Crawling the Lilliputian-glaciered road.

Your eyes abstract from sight by force of art
Are not the eyes I know for violent men.
They mourn though moderately the lightninged pine
Right from the steps beside the second column

Or smile the hour of peaches on the porch:
Summer the setting; a whirlwind in the field;
And Mattie's roses, Susan's hollyhocks
Sieving the heat. You contemplate the peach

And estimate its sweetness as you turn
Its body in your fingers. Masculine
Those fingers, yet not fingers that would wrest
The bloody sun from metaphor to fact.

This hand now fists a sword, the painted hand
Anachronistic less by fault of art
Than fault of calendar: no map connotes
The dusk at Roncevaux mythed of silver horns.

AUBADE FOR JOHN STERLING

John Sterling wined in candle light
His hair as yellow as the flame
Marble hands and teeth like dice;
And silver April by the door.

And April greened the fields he rode
Next morning townward; horsed and bold,
Progenitive of death, his hair
Lay bannered on the obscene air.

John Sterling rode his fields from town
With blood upon his yellow hair;
Three buzzards, lecherous, ellipsed
Above him in the obscene air.

Rode home in miracle of death,
John Sterling. Make no answer now
For circumstance of death and spring:
We stand emasculate of grief.

II

Ten niggers strut in Sterling's yard
To excavate his earthhoused bones;
They watch three buzzards overhead
Ellipsing in the April air

And shiver in the sunlit grove
Knowing for what ore they mine
Who dig the earth to plant no seed:
Stillborn the harvest of their year.

Earth-sheltered sixty years, the hair
Learns anthropophagic intent
And growing sucks the breaking air
Through fissures in the firmament.

(A pickaxe and a spade, a spade:
Let firmament of earth be made
And there the cosmic bones may fade
While hair erects its autumn glade.)

The yellow hair has tunneled through
Sieving the coffin wood as light
That falls between the chinks of logs,
Wispy, braided in the night.

John Sterling's fingers clutch no reins;
No saddle warms his naked thighs;
No spur to heel nor sword to side;
Nor blood lies coral on the bone.

Ten niggers now the steed he rides,
And dew the wine to warm his veins;
Three buzzards, lecherous, now guide
John Sterling into town again.

LITERATURE AND EXAMINATIONS

Aldous Huxley

IT HAPPENS on the average once every three or four months. The postman drops into my letter box an envelope addressed in an unfamiliar writing and postmarked anywhere from Oslo to Algiers. Opening it, I find a letter, sometimes in strange English, sometimes in one of the foreign languages with which an ordinarily cultured person is supposed to be familiar. The writer begins by an apology. He (or as often she) is sorry to trouble me, but the fact is that he or she is a student at the university of X or Y or Z, and that, in order to obtain his or her Doctorate of Letters, Diploma of Pedagogy, Bachelorship of Modern Languages, Aggregation to the University, or whatever the thing may happen to be called, he or she is writing a thesis about my books—or more often about some particular aspect of my books, such as their style, their construction, the influence upon them of other books, the idea of God in them, their *weltanschauung* or *geschlechtsphilosophie*. This being so, will I kindly furnish biographical materials, a bibliography of all the reviews and criticisms written in every language, together with copies of such books as the writer happens to have been unable to obtain. In many cases the letter ends with an appeal to my better feelings: will I please do everything that is asked of me, because, if I don't, the writer will be unable to obtain the coveted post at the local university, *Lycée, Gymnasium, Preparatia,* or what not, and will have to be content with a job as a teacher in an elementary school.

My feelings when one of these letters arrives are extremely mixed. That I should be treated as though I were a classical author of some earlier century, simultaneously amuses and depresses me, tickles my self-esteem and at the same time punctures it. I like very naturally to think that I am being read; but the idea that I am being *studied* fills me, after the first outburst of laughter, with a deepening gloom. There is something extremely disagreeable about being treated as though one were dead when one supposes—perhaps (and this is the really disquieting thought) mistakenly—that one is still very much alive. Nor is the anticipation of posthumous Fame any compensating satisfaction. For to be sufficiently famous to deserve elaborate study in a modern university is quite humiliatingly easy. Merely to have published is now a sufficient claim to academic attention. As time passes and the number of aspirants to diplomas and doctorates continues to pile up, it becomes increasingly difficult to find any significant aspect of a good writer's work which has not already formed the subject of a thesis. The candidate for academic honors has no choice but to study the insignificant aspects of a good writer's work or else the work, not yet explored, because universally deemed not worth exploring, of a bad writer. Universities do me the honor of treating me as though I were defunct and a classic; but it is an honor, alas, that I share with Flecknoe and Pixéricourt, with Hofmann von Hofmannswald and Nahum Tate.

Walter Raleigh used to say that the teaching of literature always verged on the absurd. He understated the case. The teaching of literature often oversteps the verge and tumbles headlong into the most grotesque absurdity. It is absurd, for example, that students should be forced to spend months and years of their lives on the study of writers who are, by universal consent, of no importance whatsoever. It is equally absurd that they should spend months and years on the study of unimportant aspects of the work of good writers. Very many of the scores of theses produced each year in the various universities of the world are totally pointless. But the teaching of literature produces other absurdities no less monstrous than the learned thesis about a trivial theme. Comparatively few students aspire to specialized learning. For every doctor there are hundreds of bachelors. These obtain their degrees by retailing at second hand a little of the learning and a good deal of the literary criticism of others. Fashions in criticism

change, and the candidate must be able to regurgitate the judgment in vogue in academic circles at the time of his ordeal. Success in literary examinations comes to those who know, among other things, what formulae happen momentarily to be correct.

What applies to literature applies also to the fine arts. For there are now academic institutions which actually give people degrees in art—minor degrees for those who know a list of dates and can repeat the proper ritual *mantras* about pictures and churches and statues, higher degrees to those who undertake profound original researches into the work of the deservedly neglected artists of the past.

The ultimate cause for this on the whole deplorable state of things is economic. Degrees have a definite cash value. The possession of a given diploma may make all the difference (as my correspondents so often point out in their appeals to my better feelings) between low wages and a low social position in an elementary school and good wages, with considerable social prestige, in the hierarchy of secondary education. Literature and fine arts figure in most curricula at the present time; men and women aspire to teach these subjects; headmasters and education authorities want to be able to distinguish between those who are 'qualified' to teach them and those who are not; universities oblige by creating faculties of literature and fine arts, complete with all the apparatus of diplomas, degrees, and doctorates. Now it is obviously necessary that, for examination purposes, literature and the fine arts should convert themselves, at any rate partially, into parodies of the exact sciences. Literature and art appeal as much to the affective and conative as to the merely cognitive side of man's being. But if you are going to give people marks for literature and art, you must ask them questions that can be answered correctly or incorrectly; you must set them tasks which can be performed only by dint of persevering industriousness. Candidates for the lower degrees will be required, like candidates for the lower degrees in chemistry, say, or biology, to read textbooks and do 'practical' work. (In the case of literature, this practical work consists, like the theoretical work, in reading. But whereas theoretical reading is a reading of textbooks, practical reading is a reading of the original texts.) Candidates for the higher degrees are expected, like the prospective doctor of science, to do a piece of original research and record their discoveries in

a thesis. Even the laboratory methods of exact science are parodied. Literature does not lend itself to being weighed or measured; but at least its material embodiments can be minutely observed and accurately reproduced. The editing of texts has become a branch of microscopy.

It is quite true, of course, that literature and the fine arts have non-literary and non-artistic aspects. They provide important documents in the fields, for example, of social and economic history, of psychology, of philology and the philosophy of language. Moreover, writers and artists employ techniques of expression which profitably lend themselves to scientific analysis. Thus, the *alchimie du verbe,* as Rimbaud called it, can be made to yield some at least of its strange secrets; the geometry and optics of picture-making are worthy of the most serious study. In so far as they are not literature and not art, literature and art can be subjected most fruitfully to the methods of science. And, in effect, much excellent work in history, psychology, and so forth has been done by the writers of supposedly literary and artistic theses. All would be well if the universities would insist that such work is frankly historical, psychological, and the rest, and that it has little or nothing to do with literature as literature or with art as art. But unfortunately this necessary distinction is not drawn. Under the present dispensation, absurd pseudo-scientific research—into the date, shall we say, of John Chalkhill's second marriage, into the indebtedness of Shadwell to Molière—is as freely encouraged as genuinely scientific research carried out for the purpose of establishing significant relations between one set of facts and another. Moreover, the scientifically treatable, non-literary and non-artistic aspects of literature and art are kept hopelessly mixed up with their purely literary and artistic aspects. Candidates are given marks for displaying symptoms, not merely of knowledge, but also of sensibility and judgment—other people's sensibility, in general practice, and other people's judgment. Perfectly good scientific work has to be accompanied by the repetition of the *mantras* of fashionable criticism. The aesthetic heart must be worn, all through the weary hours of the final examination, palpitating on the sleeve. Every candidate for the bachelorship or doctorate is expected to overflow with the pious phrases of 'appreciation.' The present examination system is calculated to produce the literary and artistic equivalents of Tartufe and Pecksniff.

That men should hypocritically pay the tribute that philistinism owes to culture is greatly to be desired. The tendency to be realistic and hard-boiled is as dangerous in the sphere of culture as in that of politics. You cannot appeal to the humanitarianism of a fascist who starts out with the realistic assumption that because, in fact, might generally prevails, might is therefore right and should never make any concessions at all. Similarly, you cannot appeal to the cultural piety of a low-brow who thinks that, because most human beings are like himself, low-browism is therefore right and ought to triumph over high-browism. Without moral hypocrisy and intellectual snobbery, the decencies of life would lead a most precarious existence.

Intellectual snobbery, I insist, is an excellent thing; but like all excellent things, there may be too much of it. An examination system that encourages the candidate for a degree to adorn his non-literary and non-artistic knowledge of literature and art with a veneer of 'appreciative' cant is calculated to produce an excessive number of cultural Pecksniffs, each convinced, on the strength of his diploma, that he is always right. Under a more rational system of education, degrees in literature and art would not be given. Literary and artistic documents would, however, be used as the material of scientific researches in other fields. Feats of mere industry for industry's sake, such as the compilation of theses about writers valueless from a literary point of view and of no particular historical, psychological, economic, or other interest, would be discouraged. The application of exact scientific methods to the typography of old books could safely be left to the voluntary enthusiasm of Nature's philatelists and crossword puzzlers. Meanwhile of course, efforts would be made to encourage students to read and to look at works of art. Groups would be organized for the reading of papers and the discussion of literary and artistic problems. There would also be exercises in the art of writing clearly and correctly. In this way, the natural sensibilities of the students might be developed and the tendency, so much encouraged by the examination system, to mug up other people's judgments and repeat them, mechanically and without reflection, severely discouraged. At the same time students would be able to feel that their scientific work—the study of the significant non-literary and non-artistic aspects of literary and artistic documents—was genuinely valuable

and enlightening, not the mere parody of scientific work that, too often, they are expected to do at present.

As things stand at present, it would be very difficult to make the kind of changes I have indicated above, for the simple reason that there are very many people who, for economic reason, *want* degrees in literature and the fine arts. The employers of academic labor regard such degrees as qualifications for comparatively well-paid posts. It will be impossible to change the existing examination system until they have been educated to think differently.

MADNESS IN THE HEART

. . . the heart of the sons of men is full of evil
and madness is in their heart while they live . . .

Ecclesiastes IX, 3.

Edward Donahoe

WHEN HE was nine Carl Philbin began to believe that that strange, cross man, his grandfather Wilson, was unusually fond of him. The old man rarely smiled at him, never patted his head like his grandfather Philbin. Carl did not like his amiable and slightly doddering paternal grandfather half so well. Grandfather Wilson was known in Pleasant Prairie as a 'character.' Because he was rich his vagaries were treated with respect. His crossness was often funny, Carl thought. He said the funniest things crossly, without smiling. Grandfather Philbin was always smiling, but he never said anything funny. People said that he was a saint, whereas old man Wilson was a devil. It is easier for children to admire devils than saints. There is something appealing about a devil. Saints never give children silver dollars to buy candy with. That was what his grandfather Wilson used to do when he would meet Carl in the street. His other grandfather did give Carl a buffalo nickel once. Grandfather Wilson pointed out something amusing about the buffalo. He was a terrible and wicked old man.

Timothy Wilson was born in County Down in the north of Ireland. That was against him, perhaps. The people of the north of Ireland, according to Carl's Philbin relatives, were not Irish at all. It must be wrong not to be Irish, Carl thought, and to regret being Irish was unspeakable. He never told anybody in his life that he had always wanted to be French. He liked the beautiful French names in Geography and pictures he had seen of the Place de la Concorde and Versailles. He wished he could have had a name

like some of the Osage mixed-bloods with French names who went to school with him. Names like Pappan, Plomondon, Fronkier and De Noya. (He supposed years later that De Noya was a corruption of de Noailles, that most glamorous of French names.)

The Philbins were Irish and aggressively proud of it. Many years later when Carl had spent several years in France he ceased liking the French and was not at all sorry he was Irish. His grandmother Wilson had come from Galway. Why she, who had been gently born, had married ferocious Timothy Wilson from Ulster, a few days after they had met in Lawrence, Kansas, before the Civil War, her friends could never understand. The simple explanation that she loved him never occurred to them. He was a wild, rather handsome fellow, who lived recklessly, driving mule teams across the plains to Colorado, fighting Cheyennes, and getting drunk. A fine husband for a young woman who had been educated at the Convent of the Sacred Heart in Galway.

In explaining her husband's quite shocking profanity Mrs. Wilson used to say: "Not even the saints could drive mules for hundreds of miles without learning to curse and swear. Besides, taking the Holy Name in vain is an Irish affliction which God will forgive us for. Timothy became a Catholic to marry me, and he might be one to this day except for the trouble with Father Briscoe. And I don't blame Timothy for that."

The trouble with Father Briscoe occurred in the 70's. Peter Lacey, a poor man in a rural parish near Lawrence to which the Wilsons belonged, hanged himself one night in a fit of drunken depression. Father Briscoe, a stern, uncompromising priest of a type which has died out of Catholicism, refused him Christian burial in the ugly little cemetery on the prairie. That seemed to Timothy Wilson an intolerable humiliation to the dead man's family. He assured the Widow Lacey that her man would be buried in the Catholic cemetery, in spite of Father Briscoe or the Devil himself. By moonlight he and a few other men, whose reluctance to go against the priest he had overcome with whiskey, dug a deep grave for Peter Lacey in the Wilson plot and lowered the pine coffin into it.

The remains of Peter Lacey are in consecrated ground where they will remain until the Last Judgment. But whether the curse, which Father Briscoe pronounced the following Sunday at mass upon Timothy Wilson

and his children and his children's children, was really an effective curse is a matter of doubt. As a little boy Carl believed in the curse and was fascinated by it. Because of it he liked to think himself different from other children. When he grew up and ceased to believe in the efficacy of such a curse he almost regretted his disbelief. It would be easier to explain certain tragedies which had happened to the Wilsons if one could attribute them to Father Briscoe's curse.

In the 90's the Wilsons removed from Kansas to Pleasant Prairie in the new territory of Oklahoma. Timothy Wilson was in his early fifties and well-to-do. He had prospered in Kansas. He had perhaps thirty thousand dollars in cash and several valuable farms in the valley of the Kaw. In those lean years following the depression of 1893 he was considered rich. He built a large white house with Corinthian pillars in front of it on Cherokee Avenue, and with his son Paul established the First National Bank of Pleasant Prairie. Paul had attended the University of Kansas. He was the Wilsons' only son. There were four daughters: Cecelia, Ellen, Agnes, and Charlotte. Cecelia, the eldest, had married Franz Dreher, a German farmer in Kansas. They followed the Wilsons to Oklahoma. It was a happy marriage, although it was agreed that Cecelia might have done better. Ellen, who was to be Carl's mother, had taught school for a few years in Kansas, and no one in Pleasant Prairie at that time being literate enough for her to marry, she remained at home and waited for a man of education to appear. In 1899 she found such a man in John Philbin, who had two degrees from the University of Michigan. He had abandoned teaching in a small college in Iowa in order to join his brothers, who were already building small fortunes in the territory. Carl was the only child of the marriage between Ellen Wilson and John Philbin. Agnes Wilson married Max Lansing, a rancher, and lived a few miles from town. Charlotte Wilson, the youngest, was still in grammar school at the turn of the century. She was her father's favorite.

II

Carl remembered his aunt Lottie as a beauty. She probably was hardly beautiful at all, but she had yellow hair, she dressed better than any young woman in town, and she had an expensive way about her which made her, in Carl's estimation, a very wonderful and almost improbable person. No one else had an aunt like her. Aunts were usually either preoccupied and

disapproving, or faintly repulsive women who referred mysteriously, within Carl's hearing, to certain seizures they were victims to. He remembered certain homely phrases they used, and years later he learned what was meant by them. Aunt Lottie was young and friendly. She played ragtime on the fine new Steinway grand piano which Grandfather Wilson had given her. Carl remembered the diamonds flashing on her fingers as she played "Everybody's Doing It." She danced the Grizzly Bear, the Bunny Hug, the Turkey Trot, and the Texas Tommy with her young men. Like her father she gave Carl a silver dollar almost every time they met. She was the only relative except his mother who ever kissed him without making him slightly sick.

Occasionally his aunt would take him for a ride in the shiny new buggy which her father had given her. Cynthia, her stunning mare, had come all the way from Tennessee. It was the pleasantest experience imaginable to sit beside his lovely aunt, her pink linen skirt gracefully arranged over her pretty ankles, the gleam of her white shirt-waist almost dazzling in the afternoon sunlight, a stiff straw sailor perched gaily on her bright hair. She drove like a goddess down Cherokee Avenue, turning into Superb Street so that the hateful Marengo girls could admire and envy her elegant equipage. They usually drove for an hour, sometimes crossing the Arkansas River and venturing a few miles into the beautiful Osage hills, where outlaws used to hide, and where there is always the sense of danger to this day.

Often they would meet Timothy Wilson on their return, waiting for them near the stable, a short, stocky man with an Edward VII beard, still good-looking, who carried an umbrella every day of his life. Aunt Lottie would lift her hand in greeting, halting Cynthia with a flourish. The old man would smile at her with ineffable tenderness. She was the only person he ever smiled at.

"How's my beautiful beauty today?" he would ask. And then he would acknowledge Carl's existence. "Who's that little blackguard with you? Can't you get a beau nearer your own age? You'll be an old maid yet."

He was never without fear that she would marry and leave him at any time. He played with his fear recklessly, teasing her for being unmarried, ridiculing the young men who came to see her so cruelly that she would

fly into a rage and refuse to speak to him for days. She had a temper to match his own. She had always done what she pleased in life. He had made that possible for her. When the inevitable time came for her to fall in love and marry he might have known that she would do so in spite of any objection on his part. They were both ruthlessly selfish people, exactly alike. They loved and hated where they pleased. They endured no restraint. They were passionate, generous, and, when they pleased, tender. They were also shockingly cruel to anyone who challenged their arrogant wills.

She fell in love at last. Carl was twelve years old and he remembered that tumultuous time forever. She was in her middle twenties. She had been in no hurry to marry. She had too much sense to throw herself away on an unambitious clerk in a store or a mild-mannered young physician. Such men were too tame for her tempestuous petticoats. She wanted a man who was all male and who smelt of whiskey and cigars before breakfast. She would have made any other kind of man miserable.

Samuel Passington had come to Pleasant Prairie to practice law. He was young, darkly good-looking and, although he was not yet rich, there was every reason to believe that he would be. Paul Wilson regarded him favorably, and Paul was Pleasant Prairie's first snob. He was fond of poker and liquor. His manners were the elaborate manners which are slightly ridiculous to everybody but high-spirited women. He was exactly the man for Lottie Wilson. All Pleasant Prairie thought so except her father. Timothy Wilson would not have given up his daughter to the most remarkable and admirable man in the world.

Lottie told her father that she was in love with Sam Passington, that he had made her an offer of marriage and would apply formally for his consent. Timothy Wilson growled with pain and rage. He was about to utter a series of violent oaths and to behave like all outraged fathers since Juliet's. But he saw Lottie's blue eyes flashing dangerously. The line of her jaw became too strongly defined for him to be unaware of it. The softer outline of her lips vanished. Her mouth was sharply cut and suddenly almost lipless. He attempted diplomacy for the first time in his life.

"Beauty, I want you to promise me not to do anything about marrying for a year," he said. As the words of refusal began welling forth in her mouth he hurried on: "Now I want you to go to California for a nice long

trip. You always wanted to go to Los Angeles. I'll give you plenty of money, and, by God, if you don't stay at the best hotels I'll find out about it and be madder'n hell! You'll forget that blackguard—I mean that fellow Passington—in a week. I'll call up the Santa Fe agent right away and reserve a berth for you. Come down to the bank in the morning and we'll have everything fixed up for your trip."

It was never clear to Carl afterwards why his aunt acquiesced, even if only temporarily. It was unlike her to wait for anything she wanted. She must have known as she waved from the Pullman window to the old man, who was shaking his umbrella at her playfully, that she would marry Sam Passington within a month. Her lover followed her to California in a fortnight. They were married there exactly three weeks after her departure from home.

III

Timothy Wilson's rage was a fearful thing. The first thing he could think of to do was to go into the parlor, where the piano he had given Lottie was, and chop the shiny mahogany instrument to pieces with an axe. He had locked the door so that his wife could not interfere. He also destroyed a rather unsuccessful likeness of Lottie, which had been painted by a nun at a convent which Lottie had attended in Wichita several years earlier. Her father had had the portrait expensively framed and placed above the mantel. When he unlocked the door he found himself confronted by his quiet wife, who for almost fifty years had never lifted her voice against him. She was very angry. For a moment he was frightened.

"Why, Mollie," he said, "you look so white."

"You terrible man, Timothy Wilson!" she managed to say, her voice high and trembling. "She'll never forgive you, breaking up her beautiful piano like a devil out of hell. You're as wicked as Satan himself, destroying the lovely picture of her, too. I'm glad she married Sam Passington. It serves you right. I'm glad, I'm damned glad!"

This was too much. Timothy Wilson walked in silence to the kitchen, found the can of kerosene which was used to light fires, and went outside. His wife followed him. She saw him pour kerosene on the roses which she had cultivated with such difficulty and care in a dry, perverse climate. He was destroying all the beauty she had made in Oklahoma.

Mollie Wilson was a woman who had never yet made an important decision, unaided, in her life. At sixty-seven she went into her bedroom and put on her hat. It was a lovely June day. She did not bother about a wrap. She telephoned her son-in-law, John Philbin, to come for her in his new automobile. (She had always been afraid to ride in it until then.) She was waiting for him at the curb when he drove up in the White Steamer ten minutes later. She told him to take her to Ellen. She did not look around at her husband, cursing and weeping on the front porch. She never returned to that house or to him.

IV

Everybody in the Wilson family was waiting for the return of Lottie and Sam, who had prolonged their wedding journey by going to Hawaii. Timothy Wilson was waiting alone in the large house on Cherokee Avenue, impatient as a tiger. Everything was very still and breathless for a while, as immediately before an Indian attack or a storm in August. Carl had once watched a cyclone, whirling out of the southwest like a vast top, and the intolerable fragment of that afternoon before the cyclone arrived to destroy half of Pleasant Prairie was like the quiet time preceding his aunt's return.

One afternoon Carl returned home from school to find his grandfather with his mother. They were sitting in the dark little library which was used for secret and important conferences. It was a small, dark room and because of that it was thought to have privacy as well. But it had four doors, and it was impossible to shut them all at once without rearranging furniture and calling in Caledonia, the cook, to help. Besides, people in the West do not like doors to be shut between rooms. They like one room opening into another, and that one into another. It was not difficult for Carl to hear what his grandfather was saying.

"It's like this, Ellen: that girl deliberately deceived me. She's ungrateful as my bitch whelp we raised in Kansas. I'm through with her forever. Not only that: I'm expecting every last one of you girls to refuse to have anything to do with her when she comes back with that—that . . . "

"Father!"

"I mean it, so help me. She'll find out what a blackguard she's married to. She'll be sick enough of her marriage. And I'll hound her so she can't

have a minute's happiness with him. The rest of my life I'll devote to that. Everything I can do to disgrace her I'll do, by God! I'll tell everybody in town what she is. They'll point at her in the streets as the bad woman who broke up her poor old father's home." Tears of rage and self-pity wet his cheeks and flowed into his beard.

"She isn't responsible for breaking up your home, Father. You can't say that. You broke up your home yourself. Mother couldn't stay with you after what you did. Those roses meant more to her than anything else, more even than we do. How could you do such a thing? And Lottie's piano, and the lovely picture Sister Mary Josephine—"

"To hell with Sister Mary Josephine!"

"Oh Father, if you ever want Mother to come back . . . "

"Want that woman to come back? Do I want poison ivy or the scurvy? Do I want lockjaw and cholera? Oh God! You foolish Ellen, don't you see that I'm about through with all of you? If you ever have anything to do with Lottie and that scoundrel she's living with I'll put a curse on you, too! You can tell that to Cecelia and Agnes, too. And you needn't think I'm only talking. I mean every word I say."

"You're making a mistake, Father." Ellen's voice was firm and no longer soft. She was becoming angry. "You know us better than to believe we'll turn against our own sister for marrying a fine, decent man, a man you ought to be proud of."

"Ellen, if you say another word—" He rose, found his hat and umbrella and left the house.

Carl came into the room. His mother was in tears. She turned away from him angrily. He had blundered stupidly, coming into the room at that time.

V

Cecelia and Agnes were both called upon by their father, who gave them the alternative of breaking with Lottie or himself. They refused to promise not to see their sister and were assured in the most abusive terms that they had forfeited his love and money forever. He had, of course, never heard of King Lear, but he would have found comfort and pleasure in identifying himself with that misused old father. His own rage and anguish were

pitiful, even though he deliberately deluded himself into believing himself brutally treated by his daughters.

Timothy Wilson declared war against his daughters with terrible formality. At Christmas he wrote a letter to each of them, announcing his intention to harass them until the end of his life. With subtle cruelty he chose Christmas as a fitting time to attack. It was agreeable to think that he could make them extremely miserable at a season when they might be expected to be comparatively happy. The letters, which arrived by Special Delivery every Christmas morning for several years, were so extravagantly abusive, and even obscene, that they would have been valuable documents for a psychiatrist if they had been preserved. They were all destroyed as soon as they were read. Carl saw only one of them, the first to his mother, and he could only imagine how outrageous they must have become, year after year. The grief they caused his mother and her sisters they never revealed to anyone, not even to one another. They merely said: "Did you receive yours?" And they would look at one another in an exchange of mute despair. They did not even show the letters to their husbands. They would have been ashamed to. Besides, to have done so would have precipitated violence and inevitable scandal.

Paul Wilson had already declared his neutrality. He had been given, on his father's retirement from business at that time, most of his father's interest in the First National Bank, and he had no desire to bring any paternal wrath upon himself by treating his sisters affectionately. He almost never saw them. But even Paul was disturbed when little notes in the old man's handwriting were found tacked on telephone poles all over town. These notes, addressed "to the good people of Pleasant Prairie," accused his daughters, whose names he carefully printed, of having ruined their old father's life by disrupting his home, forcing him to live by himself in loneliness and discomfort.

Carl found one of these notes and kept it for a long time in the pocket of his Norfolk jacket. It was written in the cramped script of an old person, and the spelling was faulty. Carl was perhaps as ashamed of the spelling as of the contents. He was filled with a shame far more sickening than anger. He was, strangely, not angry at his grandfather. It disturbed him that he was not angry. He was aware that he should want to kill his grand-

father for bringing this disgrace upon his mother. He was sorry that he did not even want to kill his grandfather.

In the Pleasant Prairie *Pioneer* a few days before Christmas every year a small item appeared among the advertisements:

> Mr. Timothy Wilson intends having his Christmas dinner this year at Joe Jackson's Cafe. adv.

Joe Jackson's was a rather disreputable restaurant run by a negro.

VI

Lottie was walking on Tonkawa Avenue one afternoon with Mrs. Ware and Mrs. Tally, two ladies who had come to Pleasant Prairie with their husbands at the beginning of the oil discoveries there in 1915. They were Eastern women, smartly dressed and very attractive. Lottie was accompanying them to an auction bridge party in their honor that afternoon. She chatted pleasantly with them, conscious of their warm approval of her, their pleasure to have her sponsor them socially in Pleasant Prairie.

They turned into Palmetto Street where their hostess, Mrs. Kindle, lived in a large square box-like house of gray stucco, surrounded by stunted catalpa trees. In front of the house on the sidewalk a familiar figure stood, leaning on an umbrella. It was her father waiting for her. A sudden panic seized her and she considered turning back. That would not do any good. There was no escape. Her father had read of the party in the *Pioneer*. He knew that she would be invited. She looked at Mrs. Ware and Mrs. Tally, both coolly unaware of what was about to happen. She already hated them for the shocked surprise which would come into their faces.

"Here comes," she began to hear, "the woman who ruined her old father's life. Here she comes, wearing the diamond rings I gave her. God curse her and strike her dead!" The rest was profanity and senseless obscenity. She wondered why he let her pass without striking her with his umbrella. His words continued, clear and terrible, until Mrs. Kindle's door closed behind them.

VII

Carl went away to school in 1914. He remained four years at St. Charles', a Jesuit boarding school near Kansas City. During the fall term of his second year there he received word from the prefect of his division that his grandfather was waiting to see him in the visitors' parlor. He was

embarrassed and confused. Should he refuse to see his grandfather? He hesitated long enough to draw a sharp rebuke from the prefect. You do not keep anyone waiting at a Jesuit school. You do as you are told, no matter how disagreeable it may be. You are supposed to walk eagerly and bravely to the most terrible ordeal.

Carl wanted to say unkind, bitter things to the old man who was standing in a dark corner of the parlor. He wanted to hate him enough to injure him physically. But he could only shake hands with him and let himself be drawn against the thick, short body of his grandfather and be kissed on the cheek. The old man's beard felt funny, not unpleasant. The kiss was dry from chapped lips.

"I'm taking you to Kansas City," his grandfather announced. "These fellows say I can. We'll have dinner at the Baltimore and see a show. You need anything?"

"No thank you, Grandfather. I don't need anything."

"Well, we'll see."

Carl wrote his mother about the trip to Kansas City. At the Orpheum they had seen a beautiful girl swinging on a trapeze. She was called Dainty Marie. They had a wonderful dinner at the Baltimore. Grandfather gave him a ten dollar gold piece. He bought him a new hat, a white sweater, a pair of gloves lined with fur, some pretty ties from Gordon Koppel. In the Union Station Grandfather also bought him a box of chocolates, a basket of fruit, and some magazines like the *Cosmopolitan* and *Red Book* which were not allowed at school.

His mother replied that she hoped he would always be courteous and kind to his grandfather. For the next two years he visited Carl once in the Fall and once in the Spring. These visits never lasted more than a day. They always went to Kansas City and Carl returned with many presents. They talked hardly at all, and never did the old man mention Carl's mother or his quarrel with her and her sisters. Every Christmas his letters reached them, but they were beginning to regard even these terrible letters almost casually. Carl's mother and his aunt Lottie were occasionally rather merry now after eggnog on Christmas Day.

When Carl left for Harvard in 1918 he never saw his grandfather again. He was in Vienna in 1923 when his mother's cable announced that he was dead.

VIII

Paul Wilson, at his father's insistence, arranged a quiet divorce for the old couple in 1918. His mother protested vainly that she was a Catholic and could not be divorced. She was divorced, nevertheless, in 1918. A property settlement was made between husband and wife. The house on Cherokee Avenue was sold. Timothy Wilson went to live at the Savoy Hotel. His wife continued to live with the Philbins. At eighty Timothy Wilson became restless and began to travel. He went to Oregon where he had a brother. He did not like his brother. A year later he went to Ireland, where he found a few relatives living near Belfast. They were too obviously eager for his money. Then he returned to Pleasant Prairie to make his will and die.

He had made several wills, but he had destroyed them all. He had given a large amount of money away. Anyone could approach him with a story of misfortune and receive generous help from him. He sent a girl with an over-rated contralto voice (and he hated singing) to Italy to study. He had even disliked the girl, but he hoped his daughters would be distressed by his spending money on her.

He became ill. It was impossible for him to be cared for at the Savoy Hotel. Very reluctantly he went to stay at the local hospital which was conducted by nuns. He became very fond of Sister Teresa, the Superior, as well as a few other nuns. One or two, notably Sister Mary Margaret, he could not bear. He amused the sisters a great deal. They were tolerant of his outbursts of rage, his impatience with certain patients who, he assured them, were not ill at all. He was, as Sister Teresa expressed it, "a handful to take care of," but he prevented life there from becoming dull.

Ellen Philbin went to see him. He refused at first to see her. On a second visit she applied to his favorite, Sister Teresa. It was she who forced him to let his daughter come into his room. Sister Teresa sat with them. It was an awkward meeting. Ten years had elapsed since the afternoon in Ellen's library. At first he would not look at her. They communicated through Sister Teresa.

"Tell my father, Sister, that John and I want him to stay with us when he is well enough," Ellen said.

"You can tell her I'll die first," the old man muttered.

"Ah, Mr. Wilson, you're a foolish, headstrong old rascal!" Sister Teresa said, her cheeks pink with anger. "Mrs. Philbin's too good to be the daughter of a man so mean and wicked as yourself."

He scowled horribly and would have sworn at the nun, but he must have remembered that it was a terrible sin to curse a religious. He had not been to confession for fifty years, but he had not forgotten that. Tears came into Ellen's eyes. She rose to leave. Her father looked at her with a fierce and pitiless hardness. Suddenly that hardness broke, for no reason that Ellen could afterwards explain to herself. His look, which had been hard, was now soft. We love and hate, cease loving and hating exactly like that.

"Ellen, go away now," he said. "I don't want you to stay any longer now. But you can come back, Ellen. I won't be minding your coming back. You go too, Sister Teresa. Hurry up, the both of you, or by God—"

He forgave Ellen. He forgave her wholly. It was difficult for Sister Teresa, aided by Ellen, to persuade him to forgive Cecelia and Agnes. Sister Teresa vowed that she would never visit him again if he would not see them. He gave in ungraciously. Cecelia and Agnes were forgiven, but they were scolded. He would not even consider forgiving Lottie. No threats Sister Teresa could make would move him. Lottie offered to go to see him, and she did stand at the threshold of his room, Sister Teresa's arm around her. But he would not see her. He turned his face to the wall and would not say anything to her.

He had prepared a final insult for Lottie. In making his last will he left her nothing. He directed that the share of his fortune which would have gone to her, be divided equally among all the churches in Pleasant Prairie.

IX

Mrs. Wilson regarded these doings with contempt. She mocked her daughters for going to see their father. As for herself, she was no milksop, she assured them. When she was through with someone she was through with him. Besides, she added with irony, wasn't she divorced from Timothy Wilson and no wife of his at all?

She spent most of her time with Ellen in the fine, large house on Poplar Street which John Philbin had recently built. Her son-in-law kept her pleasantly stimulated every evening with hot toddies. She was a happy and very pleasant divorcee of seventy-seven. John Philbin she was very proud of. He was a millionaire, as everyone had expected him to be. He had a rose garden planted especially for her to enjoy. She rarely ever thought of Timothy Wilson any more.

One afternoon he came into her life for the last time. A taxicab arrived in front of the Philbin house. Timothy Wilson got out and walked slowly to the door. He was leaning rather heavily on his umbrella. As he approached the steps he glanced admiringly at the facade of the house which he had never seen before. A negro man in a white coat let him in.

"Where's my daughter?" he cried, impatiently. "Why don't she open the door herself? Don't stand there. Get my daughter. Ellen, for the love of God, I don't like doors opened by flunkeys."

Ellen came downstairs hurriedly. She had not bothered to put up her hair when she heard that voice. It was gray hair now and it fell to her shoulders like a little girl's. In the dim light of the hall she looked like a little girl. She was wearing a white negligée. He must have thought her very pretty. He had never given her a compliment in her life, but she could tell when he approved of her.

"White dress? Why're these damned floors so slippery? Where's your mother! Don't stand with that look on your face. Do I have to look for her myself?"

"Oh no, Father." Ellen was frantic. "You hadn't better see her just yet. The shock might be bad for her."

He glared at her. "Where's your mother?"

She beckoned to him to follow her upstairs. He was out of breath when they reached the first landing, but he would not take her proffered arm.

"Wait here, Father," she said. "I'll ask her first." But he followed her so closely that there was no chance to prepare her mother for his visit. That was perhaps fortunate, for Mrs. Wilson would surely have refused to see him if she had had a chance to.

The two old people were suddenly face to face. Ellen did not attempt to explain anything to her mother. She left them together without waiting to hear what they would say to each other. She never learned what had been said between them. Her mother denied later that she had even forgiven him. But Ellen had looked through the slightly-ajar door before her father came out. He was on his knees, his face in his wife's lap. She was stroking his hair.

Ellen walked to the front door with him. He asked her where Carl was, and when she said he was in Vienna he made no comment. She guessed that he was thinking that he would never see Carl again.

He died a few weeks later in his sleep. He had forgiven everybody but Lottie.

THE COVENANT OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS AS A PACT OF PEACE

Manley O. Hudson

THE COVENANT of the League of Nations represents the most ambitious attempt which has ever been made to provide for the maintenance of peace. This is not merely because its provisions have at one time or another been accepted by sixty-two States of the world; it is also because their substance is such as to call for the abandonment of many ideas which have prevailed in the past, and because they are supported by the existence of flesh-and-blood human agencies which are established to realize its purposes.

The preamble of the Covenant states in dual form the aims of the States which have agreed to its terms. It says that the League of Nations is created "to promote international cooperation and to achieve international peace and security." Historically, however, the first of these aims was really incidental to the second; international cooperation was to be promoted because of its bearing on the maintenance of international peace. Popular opinion has always placed a similar emphasis on the objects of the League, and I think it is not improper to say that the principal purpose of the Covenant is to proscribe war. Its dispositions to this end need to be studied in some detail, but we may precede that study with some more general observations concerning their purpose and their purport.

In the atmosphere of Paris in 1919, the creation of the League of Nations seemed "essential to the maintenance of the world settlement" which the Allied and Associated nations were "met to establish." If President Wilson wished to inaugurate a "continuous superintendence of the

peace of the world," he was disposed to entrust this responsibility to the nations which were represented at Paris and which had so recently conceived themselves to be defending a general interest in the struggle with their enemies. Perhaps it was inevitable that any plans for the future which could be adopted in 1919 should have been linked with an attempt to perpetuate the settlements embodied in the treaties of peace. Only a world in the grip of a maelstrom could have been so bold as to seek the departures which the Covenant represents, and such a world was bound to attempt at the same time solution of its more immediate problems. The incorporation of the Covenant in the treaties of peace now seems to have been the only practical way by which such a large number of States could be brought to agree upon its terms. Yet it meant that the League was born with a congenital defect. Tied to the treaties of peace, the Covenant had been regarded in many quarters as a device for maintaining the power of the victors over the vanquished. After an interval of fifteen years, during which so many parts of the treaties of peace have atrophied, this weakness has become attenuated; yet it must still be borne in mind in forming any judgment of the Covenant's usefulness.

In spite of its limitations, I think it must be said that the League of Nations has achieved a surprising success as an agency for promoting international cooperation. All of the expectations of its founders have not been realized, perhaps. The great public international unions which were established in the last century, such as the International Telegraphic Union (1865), the Universal Postal Union (1874), and the Union for the Protection of Industrial Property (1883), have not been brought into any intimate relation with the organization at Geneva, and the provisions of Article 24 of the Covenant have not served to make the League the great center for all of the permanent agencies devoted to cooperative effort. Yet what has been accomplished has been truly remarkable. For the first time in the history of the world, effective and continuous attention has been given to the legislative needs of world society. With the Council of the League of Nations at hand, meeting at frequent and regular intervals, international conferences possessing legislative functions have been assembled much more easily than before, preparation for their work has proceeded much more efficiently, and decisions taken by them have been executed with more

expedition. The result today is that in a large number of collective, multipartite treaties the frontiers of international law have been advanced into new ground, and States are cooperating in the protection of their common interests on a scale hardly dreamed of when this century dawned. If all of this cooperation is not to be put down to the credit of the League of Nations, much of it has been inaugurated within the framework of the Covenant, and the mere existence of the League has inspired a new confidence in the efficacy of conscious effort directed toward an intelligent approach to the problems of our world community.

In the field of administration, also, the record of the League shows a big improvement over the pre-existing situation. Most of the so-called international offices or bureaus created before 1914 were under the supervision of some one Government, and neither the recruitment of their personnel nor the methods of their functioning justified the description of them as international. This may be seen in such a useful organization as the International Bureau of the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague, the personnel of which has always consisted entirely of Netherlands nationals, and the expenses of which are met in the first instance by the Netherlands Government with a later reimbursement by the various "Contracting States." The various international bureaus at Berne are similarly controlled by the Swiss Government. When an International Ice Patrol was set up in the North Atlantic, following the Titanic disaster, its entire management was entrusted to the Government of the United States, though the expense is ultimately borne by various Governments. The Director of the Pan American Union at Washington has always been a national of the United States. In some cases, notably in that of the International Institute of Agriculture at Rome, serious difficulties have arisen because of this national complexion of international bodies. On the whole, we may say that prior to the establishment of the League of Nations, little advance had been made in the creation and maintenance of truly international bodies. Patterns were lacking for their organization, and standards did not exist for international administration.

The progress in this field at Geneva has been on strictly international lines. Numerous standing committees and a permanent secretariat have been created, and new administrative standards have been set. It is unneces-

sary to enumerate the many committees now existing at Geneva. Some forty permanent committees of the League of Nations are listed in the Monthly Summary for February, 1935. The Permanent Mandates Commission, for example, has produced a new series of precedents which may be of great value in the future. Nor can I summarize the varied administrative activities of the Secretariat; its success in connection with the registration and publication of treaties may be cited as the realization of an aspiration which dates from 1875. The methods which have been worked out for giving effect to treaty provisions for the protection of racial, linguistic and religious minorities, though they have not given universal satisfaction, have only to be compared with the futility of insistence on such treaty provisions before 1914 to enable one to appreciate the great advance which has been made. The success of the recent plebiscite in the Saar was a striking illustration of the benefits of organized international administration. The efforts now being made to regulate the manufacture of and trade in dangerous drugs present the best example, however. In this field, pre-League Conferences were all but fruitless. Under the League, legislation has been greatly advanced, three permanent agencies have been created—an Advisory Committee on Traffic in Opium and other Dangerous Drugs, a Permanent Central Opium Board, and a Supervisory Body—and many Governments have felt so keenly their own impotence that they have conferred on these agencies powers which go so far as to include the fixing of quotas by which the imports of each State are to be regulated. There are other fields in which the classical conceptions of the complete independence of States have been broken down by the nascent international government which now centers in Geneva.

This extension of inter-State cooperation has been possible chiefly because of the existence of the Assembly and the Council of the League of Nations. Some prototypes of the Assembly existed before the war, but the Council is a brand new type of agency. The Universal Postal Union, for example, has long had a series of conferences meeting at regular intervals—its most recent conference met at Cairo in 1934; and other series of conferences which still meet date from the nineteenth century. When an attempt was made to establish a series of more general "peace conferences" meeting at The Hague, however, serious difficulties were encountered. Though the

Covenant did not require annual sessions of the Assembly of the League of Nations, it did envisage meetings "at stated intervals," and the convening of the Assembly in September of each year has now become a fixture on the international calendar. In fifteen years, eighteen sessions of the Assembly have been held. The Council, on the other hand, meets more frequently, and in the same period it has held eighty-five sessions. It was the eighty-sixth session of the Council which was held in Geneva a few weeks ago.

One cannot lay too much stress upon the importance of this element of continuity in the effort of the League "to promote international cooperation." It means not merely that continuous attention is being given to the world's current problems, but also that a failure upon any given occasion does not spell complete defeat for all time to come. Of course it is inevitable that there will be failures. Time after time at Geneva hopes have been dashed and efforts have been abandoned; yet the threads can always be taken up at some later time. A thoughtful observer will attach more importance to the existence of the Assembly and the Council and to their inculcation of the habit of conference than to their success or failure in dealing with any particular subject. What would we do in this Union of the forty-eight states of our own continent without the Congress of the United States, now succeeding, now fumbling in what it undertakes, but ready each year to go on in the situation which then exists? It is a very similar function which the Assembly and Council can serve for the sixty and more States of the world. If these agencies live, cooperation will become an ever-widening circle, and it cannot fail to contribute to laying more firmly foundations for the maintenance of the world's peace.

Our principal concern is with the Covenant as an instrument for the proscription of war, however, and I have dealt with the League's record in promoting cooperation only as an introduction to this subject. I want now to deal with the League's second function, which in the words of the Covenant is "to achieve international peace and security." This will involve, first of all, an analysis of the "obligations [Fr., *certaines obligations*] not to resort to war" which the Members of the League have assumed.

The Covenant nowhere contains a general proscription of war. It does not profess to "outlaw" all war. It does not proclaim any moral condemnation. It does not embody any ukase concerning the maintenance of peace.

Instead, it enunciates one great general principle, it provides a set of definite commitments based on this principle, it lays down specific interdictions, and it confers upon agencies in being a general authority. The Covenant thus possesses a character which at once distinguishes it from other Pacts of Peace.

The general principle which the Covenant enunciates constitutes its greatest innovation. It is a flat repudiation of conceptions which had dominated three centuries of international relations. Ever since the seventeenth century, an idea had prevailed in international law that if two States wished to go to war, it was their own affair. Other States were free to enter the war for any reasons which were to them sufficient, but unless they chose this course, they were to assume the attitude of neutrals. In course of time, an elaborate system of law grew up, establishing the rights which neutrals might assert against belligerents and prescribing the duties which they owed to belligerents so long as they remained neutrals. Spasmodically, collective efforts were made by the more powerful States in Europe to restrain other States from going to war or to prevent war as between themselves, but the Concert of Europe was never a factor to be relied upon with confident assurance; and despite such efforts, in the large it is true to say that prior to 1919 States were free to resort to force at any time and for any reasons. There was no orderly procedure to be exhausted before an appeal to force. The action of States was subject to no authoritative review, they were unrestrained by international law. This was the situation from which a world bled white sought escape in 1919.

In line with changes which have occurred in the world, the Members of the League of Nations made a solemn declaration that a war anywhere affects peoples everywhere. The words of Article 11 of the Covenant are that "any war or threat of war, whether immediately affecting any of the members of the League or not, is hereby declared a matter of concern to the whole League." This holds out as the basic principle of twentieth century international relations a conception of the *World's peace,* not unlike the conception of the *King's peace* which was made the basis of national unity in England some seven hundred years ago. It is the conception of the World's peace which has dominated so much of our striving during these post-war years. It is the World's peace which transportation and communi-

cation have made the paramount interest of a world society. It is the World's peace which a new twentieth century international law must be constructed to safeguard. It is the World's peace which present-day effort would place above the unbridled freedom of States to plunge into war as they please.

Article 11 constitutes, therefore, the heart of the Covenant. It is the support of the obligation in Article 10 to refrain from aggression, and it furnishes the central idea upon which a machinery of peaceful settlement is constructed and from which the "obligations not to resort to war" had their inspiration. Of course, the Article is not to be construed to declare that all peoples have or feel that they have an equal concern in all wars, or that they have the same concern in any war that may occur. A war between Afghanistan and Persia does not excite the same interest in the United States as a war between France and Germany; even the war between Bolivia and Paraguay, in our own hemisphere, has not aroused in the United States the same anxiety which we should feel if a war occurred between France and Germany. The new principle does not attempt to controvert these facts, and they must be borne in mind as we examine the ways in which the principle is implemented in the Covenant. Some limitations may exist, of course, on the way in which a particular State may be expected to express its concern in a particular war. Yet it is immensely significant that in Article 11 we have a wholly new approach to the problems of war and peace, and it does not require much imagination to see the thoroughgoing reforms which would have to be made in international law if it were adopted as the controlling factor of each State's national policy.

Because the principle has been enunciated in an instrument which more than sixty States have accepted at one time or another, we are not permitted to say that it has become the guiding principle of world affairs. Yet the Covenant has not stopped short with the enunciation. It proceeds to make certain provisions which are designed to encourage conduct in accordance with the principle enunciated. It provides methods for the pacific settlement of disputes, it creates obligations to refrain from going to war under certain circumstances, and it outlines measures which may be taken if these obligations should be violated.

Perhaps it is not generally realized that the Covenant does not establish any global system for dealing with international disputes. It is concerned chiefly with disputes which are "likely to lead to a rupture" (Fr., *susceptible d'entrainer une rupture*). Arbitration and judicial settlement are held out as appropriate means for the settlement of other disputes, but no obligation is created with respect to them. For disputes "likely to lead to a rupture," the obligation is precise, and the commitment of Members of the League is quite definite. If they are not submitted to arbitration or judicial settlement, they must be submitted to the Council, in order that it may endeavor to effect a settlement, and this failing, in order that it may make a report for the guidance of the parties, of other Members of the League, and of a general world opinion. The parties to the dispute are not bound to carry out the recommendations made in such a report, but its existence may serve as a barrier to hostilities against a party which does not comply with those recommendations. These provisions of the Covenant are now supplemented by other arrangements to which many of the Members of the League are parties: by the "optional clause" of the Statute of the Permanent Court of International Justice which is now binding upon forty-one States; by the Geneva General Act of 1928 to which twenty-two States are now parties in whole or in part; and by several hundreds of bipartite treaties which represent a great advance over the treaties concluded before the League was established. As a matter of fact, two hundred and forty-four bipartite treaties of pacific settlement had been registered with the Secretariat of the League of Nations on March 1, 1935, and were in force on that date. The legal system of pacific settlement resting upon or inspired by the Covenant may not be altogether adequate, but it is in some measure complete and it may be strong enough to afford escape from war where a will to peace exists.

It is this collective system of pacific settlement upon which the Covenant's proscription of war rests. Let me repeat that the framers of the Covenant did not draft a general fulmination against war. They were not bold enough to attempt to outline a method of preventing all wars. They thought first of introducing order. In a field where almost complete anarchy had previously reigned, they devised an orderly system by which effort should be made to settle any dispute that might arise "likely to lead to rupture." Yet they realized that in some cases the settlement might be sought in vain.

Within very cautious limits, they proceeded to say that war was proscribed; beyond these limits, Members of the League are left "the right to take such action as they shall consider necessary for the maintenance of right and justice," which is a euphemistic way of saying that they are free to fight as they please.

The dispositions in the Covenant proscribing war may be briefly stated. First of all, it is provided in Article 12 that if a dispute arises which is likely to lead to a rupture, the parties will in no case resort to war until three months after an award by arbitrators or a judicial decision or a report by the Council with reference to that dispute. Then there is a provision that after a dispute likely to lead to a rupture has been submitted to arbitration or judicial settlement under Article 13, either by the Permanent Court of International Justice or by any other tribunal, "the Members of the League agree that they will carry out in good faith any award or decision that may be rendered and that they will not resort to war against a Member of the League which complies therewith." When a dispute has been submitted to the Council and when the members of that body (other than the representatives of the parties to the dispute) have unanimously agreed to a report on it, "the Members of the League agree that they will not go to war with any party which complies with the recommendations of the report." A report may be adopted by a majority of the Council, but without the same legal consequences. The Council may have referred the dispute to the Assembly, and in this case the report must have been "concurred in by the representatives of those Members. . . represented on the Council and of a majority of the other Members of the League, exclusive in each case of the representatives of the parties to the dispute." If, however, a report cannot be agreed to with such a measure of unanimity in either body, the parties remain entirely free to take matters into their own hands. Even if an arbitral award or a judicial decision or a report by the Council or Assembly is not complied with by either party, there is the obligation in Article 12 for both of the parties to refrain from resort to war for a period of three months after it is rendered.

These provisions may seem to be a bit complicated. What is the essence of them? Let me give a short summary. If two Members of the League of Nations are engaged in a serious dispute, they are bound under the Cove-

nant to submit it for settlement, either to the Council, (from which it may be referred to the Assembly), to the Permanent Court of International Justice, or to some tribunal of their own choice. If a settlement is proposed, neither party to the dispute is to go to war for a period of three months. No party may ever legitimately go to war against another party which complies with the proposed settlement, but after a period of three months war remains a possible remedy against a party which fails to comply with it. And if no settlement is proposed within time-limits which are set, the parties to the dispute may go to war. Thus, the Covenant stops short of proscribing war in every case. There are "gaps" in its system, and efforts have been made to fill these gaps. Essentially, the proscriptions of the Covenant are limited to defined categories of cases, in which a definite system of pacific settlement may have broken down.

These provisions of the Covenant have been reenforced, however, in two ways: first, by general powers conferred upon the Council, and second, by a system of possible sanctions. Both of these features of the Covenant must now be considered.

By Article 4 of the Covenant, the Council is empowered to deal "with any matter within the sphere of action of the League or affecting the peace of the world." It is a very general mandate, the apparent effect of which is greatly reduced by the requirement of unanimity for any action to be taken. As any Member of the League whose interests are "specifically affected" is entitled to representation on the Council (Article 4, paragraph 5), unanimity limits the mandate with reference to disputes to a role of conciliation. This is similarly true of the mandate of the Council under Article 10 to "advise" upon the preservation of States' integrity and independence, and of its general mandate under Article 11 to take cognizance on its own motion of "any war or threat of war," and to "take any action that may be deemed wise and effectual to safeguard the peace of nations." Yet the fact that such general responsibility rests on the Council is important, and it may enable efforts to maintain peace to be continued even after the exhaustion of the methods of pacific settlement for which the Covenant provides. A Convention to Improve the Means of Preventing War, opened to signature on September 26, 1931, attributes special functions to the Council, in

the exercise of which only a qualified unanimity would be required; but it has not been brought into force.

The sanctions of the Covenant present very different problems. As they are embodied in Article 16, the only sanction which applies to a violation of any of its covenants by a Member is that of expulsion from the League, which may be effected by a unanimous vote of the Council, exclusive of the representative of the Member affected. This sanction has never been applied, and its nature is such that its application must be made only rarely. More important are the sanctions which are intended to apply to any "resort to war" by a Member in disregard of its obligations with respect to pacific settlement. The first problem is to determine when there has been such a "resort to war." It may happen in any one of four principal cases: (1) in case a Member resorts to war without having referred its dispute to arbitration, judicial settlement or inquiry by the Council; (2) in case a Member resorts to war against a State which complies with an arbitral award or judicial decision, or with the recommendations in a unanimous report by the Council or Assembly; (3) in case a Member resorts to war within three months after an award or decision or a report; or (4) in case any Member resorts to war after a reference of the dispute to the procedure required and before six months have elapsed for an award or a decision or before six months have elapsed for a report by the Council or Assembly. Obviously it may be a very difficult matter to determine whether or not these conditions exist; compliance and non-compliance with terms set in an award or a decision or a report may present issues which open the possibility of wide divergence of opinion. Moreover, the expression "resort to war" is not one which reveals its application automatically; in recent years, its meaning has exercised many lawyers. It ought to be clear that the term as used in the Covenant should not be restricted to the limits of a judicial term of art. Yet the vagueness of the term leaves room for uncertainty as to the answer to be given to many questions. The Assembly of the League of Nations declared in 1921 that "the unilateral action of the defaulting State cannot create a state of war."

An even more difficult problem is presented by Article 16, however. Who is to say when the various conditions have been fulfilled which will call for the application of sanctions? Who is to say when a Member of the

League has resorted to war "in disregard of its covenants under Articles 12, 13 or 15"? To what extent is a Member of the League bound by a decision to this effect by any authority other than its own Government? Must a Member of the League await such a decision? The text of Article 16 fails to give a definite solution to these questions, and its history during fifteen years has not been such as to enable one to answer them with confidence. The study of the actual text has engrossed the attention of organs of the League throughout this period. A provisional resolution was adopted by the First Assembly in 1920; this was followed by an elaborate report by a "Blockade Committee" in 1921, and in that year certain amendments to Article 16 were proposed which have never been brought into force. The Second Assembly declared in 1921 that "it is the duty of each Member of the League to decide for itself whether a breach of the Covenant has been committed." At the same time, however, it was recognized to be within the province of the Council to express an opinion on the existence of a breach, though it has been thought that unless the defaulting Member is expelled from the League, the requirement of unanimity may preclude any formulation of a clear-cut opinion by the Council. Uncertainties continue to prevail as to these questions, and they have not been banished by the excellent reports prepared by M. de Brouckère (Belgium) in 1926 and by M. Rutgers (Netherlands) in 1928. It was truly said by M. Rutgers that "if ever the question of the application of Article 16 arose, the decision of the different countries would not depend on interpretations, however authoritative, or on the deductions of lawyers; the great question would be whether the principle of Article 16 was or was not a living reality."

Once it has been determined that a Member of the League has resorted to war in disregard of its covenants under Articles 12, 13 or 15, it is stipulated in Article 16 that a very serious consequence will follow; such Member "shall *ipso facto* be deemed to have committed an act of war against all other Members of the League." This does not mean that all other Members must immediately regard themselves as at war, i. e., in a state of war, with the defaulter; they are merely to treat the latter's action as a basis for the imposition of penalties which Article 16 then proceeds to prescribe. "Act of war" is an unhappy expression in the Covenant in this connection. It tends to create an impression that any coercive action against a covenant-

breaking State constitutes a waging of war in the historic sense of the term, an impression which is evident in the drafting of the abortive Proctocol of Geneva of 1924; but such coercion, if it is approved by the Council and undertaken in the assertion of the general interest in world peace, ought to be viewed as policing, and as such it would have little in common with war as it has been known in the past.

As to the nature of the sanctions for which Article 16 provides, there is more definiteness. Perhaps this criticism is to be made that there is too much definiteness on this point; it reflects too accurately the aims of the Allied powers which in 1919 were still fresh in the minds of the men who drafted the Covenant. The Members of the League undertake "immediately to subject it [the covenant-breaking State] to the severance of all trade or financial relations, [to] the prohibition of all intercourse between their nationals and the nationals of the covenant-breaking State, and [to] the prevention of all financial, commercial or personal intercourse between the nationals of the covenant-breaking State and the nationals of any other State." This is the enforcement of peace with a vengeance. It envisages not merely economic blockade, but also complete isolation. The very nature of the obligation would seem to presuppose cooperation between the various Members of a well-nigh universal League. Even if the obligation of a Member does not become operative until it has determined for itself that the prohibited resort to war has occurred, the obligation cannot be performed effectively in any part of the world without common action by numerous States. This is recognized in the further provision in Article 16 that Members of the League must mutually support each other in carrying out their obligations. Official discussions have emphasized that action must be "joint," and this would seem to involve a duty of the Council to make recommendations to this effect. When the Assembly acting under paragraph 4 of Article 15, adopted its report of February 24, 1933, relating to the Manchurian dispute, it stated that the Members of the League should "abstain from taking any isolated action with regard to the situation in Manchuria" and should "continue to concert their action among themselves as well as with the interested States not members of the League."

Sanctions might conceivably be brought into play without the use of force against the covenant-breaking State. That contingency is expressly

envisaged, however, in a provision that the Council shall "recommend" to the various States the military contribution they should make "to the armed forces to be used to protect [Fr., *faire respecter*] the covenants of the League." It is not military action by any State in its own interests which the Covenant allows; that would be war. It is only the use of the armed forces of one or more States on behalf of the community of nations and as recommended by the Council which is approved; and that is certainly not war of the kind which we have known in the past. This distinction needs to be dwelt upon only because it is often asserted that the Covenant requires the waging of war. What it does provide for is the possible use of an international police force. Yet no State is definitely obligated to contribute to this force; though it must permit passage by such a force through its territory. A Member's obligation to take action stops with the provisions for refraining from and suppressing all intercourse, and it remains free to exercise its own judgment with respect to the Council's "recommendation."

Article 16 is not left to operate merely *in terrorem*. It is definite, it is onerous, and it is imperative. As M. de Brouckère put it in 1926,

> Article 16 deals with a contingency to be dreaded. It lays down terrible measures for the extreme case in which the pacific endeavors of the League finally fail before the criminal determination of a State resolved on war.

Moreover, complete performance of its obligations may impinge upon the interests of States which are not bound by the Covenant, and which Article 17 may fail to bring under its aegis.

Precisely because of the severity of Article 16, certain things have happened, to which I can refer but briefly. There has been a tendency to give it an interpretation which will take account of the hesitance of certain States with respect to this general commitment. After a prolonged study of the "economic weapon," the Second Assembly concluded in 1921 that "it is not possible to decide beforehand, and in detail, the various measures of an economic, commercial and financial nature to be taken in each case where economic pressure is to be applied." In 1921 and in 1924, various amendments were proposed to Article 16, which would clarify some of its provisions and alleviate some of its rigor. When the Locarno agreements were

being negotiated in 1925, certain States replying to a request by Germany for an interpretation of Article 16 stated that in their view

> each State Member of the League is bound to cooperate loyally and effectively in support of the Covenant and in resistance to any act of aggression to an extent which is compatible with its military situation and [which] takes its geographical position into account.

This interpretation tends to deprive the obligations stipulated in Article 16 of some of their general applicability.

In view of the difficulties of applying Article 16, a persistent activity has been carried on at Geneva with a view to saying when a State is to be branded as an "aggressor." That term is not employed in the systematic part of the Covenant (it is employed in Article 10), but it has been employed quite generally in discussions of the application of Article 16. Many people seem to think that no useful definition of aggression can be devised; yet any contemplation of action to be taken as a sanction of peace after preventive measures have been exhausted must rest upon the conception. In 1924, the famous Protocol of Geneva, which was never brought into force, was explicit in laying down tests for a presumption as to who may be an aggressor, tests chiefly centering upon a State's failure to follow through the orderly procedure of pacific settlement provided by the Covenant. More recent effort has linked the conception not to the pacific settlement procedure, but to the commission of certain acts. At the Geneva Disarmament Conference in 1933, a measure of agreement was achieved upon a formula which now has some currency. According to this test, subject to other agreements in force, that State is an aggressor

> which is the first to commit any of the following actions:
>
> (1) Declaration of war upon another State;
>
> (2) Invasion by its armed forces, with or without a declaration of war, of the territory of another State;
>
> (3) Attack by its land, naval or air forces, with or without a declaration of war, on the territory, vessels or aircraft of another State;
>
> (4) Naval blockade of the coasts or ports of another State;
>
> (5) Provision of support to armed bands formed in its territory which have invaded the territory of another State, or refusal, notwith-

standing the request of the invaded State, to take, in its own territory, all the measures in its power to deprive those bands of all assistance or protection.

This formula has been actively promoted by the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and it is now embodied in various multipartite and bipartite instruments which have a certain bearing upon Article 16 of the Covenant.

In this connection, I may mention also a movement which has taken place at Geneva to facilitate the application of Article 16 by providing in advance for financial assistance in the form of guarantees for loans, to be given to a State which is the victim of aggression. This movement culminated in 1930 in the opening to signature of a Convention on Financial Assistance, which has not yet been brought into force although it has been signed on behalf of a large number of States.

In practice, the Covenant's system for the proscription of war has not, as a whole, been tested. Disputes in large number, some sixty or more, have come before the Council, and two of them have been referred to the Assembly. In many instances, the system has worked admirably. The Council has either been able to encourage a direct settlement by the parties, or with the aid of the Permanent Court of International Justice or of some *ad hoc* committee it has succeeded in devising a *modus vivendi* which, after delay in some cases, the parties could accept. In some of the earlier disputes over frontiers, the assistance of the Council proved most valuable. In a few instances, the record of the Council is even triumphant. In a dispute between Bulgaria and Greece in 1925, the functioning of the Council was an instant success. In the Leticia dispute between Colombia and Peru, two years ago, an orderly settlement was reached in a situation rife with talk of war. In the more recent difficulty between Hungary and Yugoslavia over the alleged harboring of terrorists, the Council's action was prompt and decisive.

Nor can one say, even in cases of its failure to maintain or restore peace, that the collective system has broken down. In the Manchurian difficulty, seventeen long months of patient effort, in which neither China nor Japan refused its participation, preceded the adoption of the Assembly's report of February 24, 1933; and if the recommendations of that report were not

carried out, if Japan was at no time completely restrained from pushing on with hostile operations, the result was a mobilization of an informed world opinion on a scale never before known in human history. With reference to the war which is now being waged in the Chaco, the efforts of the Council and Assembly have been continuous over a period of more than two years; Paraguay having refused to accept the recommendations in the Assembly's report of November 24, 1934, an advisory committee continues to seek a way of bringing the hostilities to an end, and a fresh effort will be made when the Assembly meets again on May 20 of this year.*

In none of the cases which have arisen to date, has there been an attempt to bring Article 16 of the Covenant into play. Indeed, there has been no very serious contemplation of the employment of all the sanctions in any case. At one time when the Council was dealing with the Vilna dispute it was planned to assemble an international force to go to Vilna; to assure the orderly conduct of the plebiscite in the Saar, armed forces sent by Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands and Sweden were on hand at the Council's request, but with the consent of interested Governments. Yet no Member of the League has ever been called upon to carry out the extreme measures which Article 16 outlines.

The severity of Article 16 has had the consequence of encouraging an extreme reluctance on the part of the Members and the organs of the League to declare the existence of the conditions which would call for the application of its sanctions. For example, the Assembly in its report of February 24, 1933, and in its later resolutions on the Manchurian affair refrained from any forthright pronouncement that Japan had resorted to war in violation of its covenants. It said that the military measures adopted by Japan could not "be regarded as measures of self defense," and that they had been "marked by essentially political consideration"; it declared certain Japanese operations to be "incompatible with the legal principles which should govern the settlement of the dispute"; it asserted that "it is contrary to the spirit of of the Covenant that the settlement of the Sino-Japanese dispute should be sought under the stress of military pressure by either party"; it absolved China of responsibility for the development of events after a date in 1931; but it stopped short of any finding in express

* This article was written in the early part of May.—*The Editors.*

words that the conditions which are set by Article 16 for the application of sanctions had been met.

The Assembly's report of November 24, 1934, on the dispute between Bolivia and Paraguay presents a marked contrast with that on the Manchurian dispute. Here there was a definite declaration that:

> For several months, hostilities continued without either of the Parties appealing to the League of Nations either under Article 11 or under Article 15. The Assembly is therefore bound to record that neither of the Parties has fulfilled its undertakings under Article 12 of the Covenant.

The Assembly then proceeded to make recommendations which embodied its views of "the bases of a lasting peace." In this case, the Council had previously authorized consultations which had led some thirty States to impose an embargo on the shipments of arms and munitions to either Bolivia or Paraguay. In taking this action, Members of the League had not been applying any provision of the Covenant; they had acted *dehors* the Covenant. Yet the Assembly approved such measures; and after Paraguay had failed to accept the recommendations for a settlement contained in the report, the Advisory Committee recommended that the embargo be lifted as to Bolivia but continued as to Paraguay. The forthcoming session of the Assembly is "to consider the question of the subsequent application of the Covenant" with reference to this dispute.

In view of this analysis and history, what are we to say of the Covenant as an instrument for the proscription of war?

The strength of the Covenant lies first in the fact that it does not attempt a general condemnation of war. On the other hand, it does not stop with an incantation of peace. It lays down a very useful general principle that the world's peace is the concern of all peoples. It creates a basis for cooperation by various States to make peace a viable condition. It provides a systematic procedure for dealing with international disputes. On a background of cooperation and pacific settlement, it forbids recourse to war in definitely but cautiously defined cases. It envisages the possibility that such recourse, though illegal, may occur, and it prescribes sanctions, by no

means automatic, which should be taken against a covenant-breaker to protect the general interest in the World's peace.

The weakness of the Covenant lies first in the fact that powerful States have not accepted its provisions, or having accepted them have sought freedom from their restraints. Its "gaps" have not contributed to this result, but gaps do exist. Its system may be too general, but some of its provisions are too particular. If the whole scheme of sanctions is practicable, that fact is yet to be demonstrated, and its sanctions are too easily identified in the public mind with "pledges to wage war."

Revision of the Covenant is now being much debated, chiefly among people in States which have done least to make its provisions work. Few definite improvements have been suggested in this debate; while some changes have been proposed which are very questionable. If the Covenant had to be written for the first time in the world of today, there would be little hope of producing an instrument as good, or as likely to command a world-wide support. The advance which the Covenant represents can only be appreciated when it is compared with what went before and with what has followed since it was launched.

WOMAN IN THE HOUSE

Jesse Stuart

THE MOON was coming up over that fringe of poplar trees last night when I saw Radburn and Hankas coming through the greenbriar thicket by the pigpen. I knowed jist what had happened when I saw them together. They had been over the hill to Mort Anderson's to get some of that old rotgut licker. I knowed I was going to have a time for the night. I saw them come through the patch of ragweeds this side of the pigpen. Radburn was holding to the appletree limbs. Hankas was talking with his hands. I could see them just as plain as day. The moon shined on them and if they had been rabbits I could have shot them both, it was so light. Not even a wind was blowing to make a racket. It was the quietest night a body might nigh ever seed. The pigs thought I was coming to slop them when they passed the pigpen. The pigs grunted a little bit. Then they went back to the old sow.

I heerd Hankas say to Radburn, "We gotta take the medicine back to Lake. He is cut purty bad. I could see the blood. It is all over my hand, see! People will think I cut Lake with a knife. God Almighty knows I didn't cut Lake with anything." Then Radburn said to Hankas, "Be quiet so America can't hear you. If she thinks there's trouble she'll be right into it. She's soon hit me as not. She's soon hit you. I know her. I have lived with her long enough to know her. When we first married and got into a racket she knocked me down the first lick she struck me right above the eye. She didn't have on no knucks neither. She done hit with her plain fist. I've lived with her thirty years now and I know she'll fight. Right when we

was first married and my step-ma Middie pulled a pistol on Pap, she walked right in and said, 'Give me that gun.' Then she struck her with her plain fist right above the eye—the same place she allus hits 'em and God only knows how long Middie laid there."

"America allus wuz that way at home. When us kids was playing about the place she whipped all of us but me. I could whip America. I watched and never let her get the first lick. But ever time I whipped her Pap throwed a fit and jumped all over me. I allus told Pap she'd whip the man she married if she ever got the first lick. She allus plugs a body right above the right eye."

"She is a hard woman to live with but she is a good woman. Last winter I'd a been a dead man if hit hadn't been for my wife. You know Lefty Penix, don't you, Hankas? Well, he come over here and we got a holt of some bad licker. We must have went crazy. We got right over there by the corncrib and started to fight. I don't remember hit. But they said Lefty had the corn-knife that we keep sticking out there in the crib log to cut the cow corn with—He had that knife and was making for my throat. America saw him. And she come running right through the snow shoe-mouth deep and hit Lefty right above the eye. He had long been sobered up before he come to his senses. Both of that man's eyes settled black around them for a week and a big doorknob riz under Lefty's right eye. But my wife saved my life. If she hadn't run out there I'd a been in hell right tonight."

I could see them comin up closer to the house. There was Radburn, my man. He wore the same old dirty overalls that he'd been wearing all week in the 'backer patch. They was all gluey and would stand alone in the green 'backer glue. His shirt was dirty and his beard was out all over his face. Just me here and I was ashamed of him. Beadie went home with the little Jurdan girl to stay all night; Fonse and Gilbert went to the square dance—Libbie and Win went to see Sister Mossy last week and they ain't got back yet—I was right here—well, Pap was here. But he's sick in there in the bed. He can't do nuthin. Pap has one foot in the grave and the other foot ready to slide in. I knowed Hankas and Radburn was drinking that old rotgut they got over to Mort Anderson's. I knowed trouble was a-brewin. Everytime Radburn gits a drink he thinks he can lick me. He gits to thinkin about me knockin him down and he wants to try hit over

and show me he can lick me. Everytime he gits a drink of that old rotgut in him, hit is a fight here. I knowed what was going to happen.

Before they got up to the house I went in the back room and looked under Radburn's piller. I found his 32 automatic. The moon shined in at the back room window and left a white place on the floor. I stepped out where I could take a good look at the 32. Hit looked right purty fer a pistol. I looked into the chamber and saw that hit was loaded. Then I said to myself, "Ready Hankas. Don't care if you are my brother. Ready Radburn. I don't care if you are my man. Hit won't be a fist above the eye this time. Hit'll be a bullet." They come up and opened the door. There was Hankas, my brother, and he's a big man. Some over two hundred that man is, and mean as a copperhead. I could see in the moonlight he had one of them old sour drunkman's frowns on his face. He looked like the Devil. His arms come down nearly to his knees. They are hairy as a dog. His arms is nearly big as fence posts. He had on his old gluey 'backer clothes too. Hankas has a big blocky body without a pound of fat. He's solid as a rock. But he ain't got much of a head. Hit is a little head for sich a big body. I know how us children used to laugh at him and call him "simlon head." He'd git so mad. He'd want to fight. He could whip everybody. Well, I said if I ever got a house o' my own I'd whip him or I'd kill him before I'd let him run over me. Pap allus upheld for him at home because Pap was afraid of him and Mother was too.

They come in the house. They hushed talkin for a minute when they come in. Radburn struck a match and lit the lamp. I could see he was drunk as a biled-owl. Hankas staggered over to the mantelpiece and helt onto hit long enough to fill his pipe with my best smokin 'backer. He lit his pipe over the lamp and he looked at Radburn. Then he wiped his hands on his gluey overalls. Pon my word I wouldn't be caught wearing dirty a clothes as them men had on. Hankas said to Radburn, "Call America. Reckon she's here. We got to git the turpentine and git back to Lake. He's cut purty bad. Look at the blood on your hands and on my hands. People will think we cut him. God knows we didn't. I like old Lake. He's a bully good fellar."

"Yes and think about him layin out there bleedin in that ditch." I just stepped from the back room into where they was by the mantel-piece.

I had the 32 in my bosom. I had my hand on hit. If they had started anything I aim to let 'm have hit right above the eye. I said, "Who got cut?" Radburn said, "W'y America, Lake Burdock got cut. He's out there bleedin in the ditch." And I said, "Where did he git cut and when?" Hankas said, "Don't know how he got cut. He jist got cut 's all we know about hit. He just fell. He's cut on the hip—place big enough to lay your hand in." And I said, "This don' sound right. Somebody had to cut him. Let me see your knifes. Both of you drunk and you wouldn't know hit if you did cut him." Well Hankas looked at Radburn and Radburn looked at Hankas. Then Radburn said, "Hankas we'd better let her look at our knifes." They took their knifes out and they wasn't a drap of blood on 'em. I felt so good. I felt like gittin down on my knees and praying to God Almighty. I didn't want 'em to have to go to the pen for knifin. I'd ruther they'd go to the pen for stealing chickens than for knifin. "Pon my word, Meck," Radburn said, "we didn't cut Lake. We didn't cut him. No." Then I said, "How in the world did he git cut?" Radburn said, "I don't know." Hankas said, "I don't know." There Hankas hung to the mantel-piece. The very Devil was in his eyes. I knowed I was going to have trouble that night. The Devil was in his broth a-brewin. I said, "You ain't takin no turpentine out'n here. You go bring that man to this house. Go now before he bleeds to death." And they went out the house. Radburn looked at Hankas and Hankas looked at Radburn. They never said a word to each other ner to me.

I walked the floor. I was so uneasy. I was more uneasy than I was the night Brother Tim and Candy got in that cuttin scrape with the Tinsleys. Tim got his right eye cut out, you know, and Candy got his juggle vein nicked a little and a couple of cuts to the holler. But he lived. One of the Tinsley's bled to death. The other lived but ain't been able to work none since. I was so uneasy that night. But I was just about that uneasy this time. I didn't know what had happened. God knows I didn't. Whippoorwills hollerin up there on the hill and some leaves fell off the trees. I could hear them blowin so lonesome. And I jist paced the floor. The moon shined right up there over the hogpen. I could see the moon then jist like I could see hit last night. I could see the rails on the hogpen jist as plain as I can see my hand before me now. I was so uneasy. The moon kept gittin over further in the sky—out past the hogpen and round to the right

near the Hoggen's Graveyard. I could see the tombstones over there on that pint. Hit made me so lonesome—jist like last night. I could see the tombstones and the moon. I could hear the whippoorwills hollerin and the dead leaves a rattlin in the wind. I guess some tears come down my cheek. I thought I felt tears runnin down my cheeks. I don't know.

Then I looked through the back room winder and I seed two men coming carrying somethin. Hit looked like a log. They was staggerin up the cowpath from that gate right down yander. I heerd Hankas say, "Let's put him down Radburn and open the gate." And I saw them throw the log-lookin thing from their shoulders jist like they'd throw down a sack of corn. They opened the gate. Then they shouldered the man. Mercy, how I felt. I thought, "Now what if they bring him here and he dies from that cut. We'll all go to the pen. What if he dies on our hands. People will think we kilt him and the Law will git us all fer killin him. Merciful God, what if he's to die here. A dead man in the house. What would we do? What could we do?" But I saw Radburn and Hankas coming wobblin up the yaller bank down yander on this side of the gate. They wobbled like ducks. The moon shined down on them. It was light as day. And here they come carryin that man. The lamp was lit up in the front room and the moonlight come in at the back room winder.

They come right to the front door. Hankas was behind, carryin Lake's shoulders. Radburn was in front, carryin Lake's legs. Radburn shoved open the door and brought him in feet foremost. And he was bleedin frum the seat of the pants. The blood jist poured on the floor like water from the rain-drip. Hankas said, "Meck, git the turpentine quick. He's bleedin purty bad." And I said, "You're so drunk you don't know what you're talkin about. Turpentine ain't goin to stop that blood. Hit takes chimney-sut to stop blood. Stick your head up that fire place there and git some chimney-sut from behind the jam rock. Do hit quick. Put Lake on the bed first." They throwed Lake down on the bed hard enough to break all the slats. Lake was drunk as the Devil wanted him to be. Then I said, "Radburn you pull his pants down so I can see where this man is cut. We got to do somethin fer him." Radburn says, "You ain't no doctor, air you?" And I said to Radburn, "I may not be no doctor but tell me nairy nuther woman that's delivered more babies in this country than I have, and I'll eat her

blood-raw. Who's cured more sick than I have among cattle and men? Who's cured more colic and fever than I have? Who does the people come to when they want help—even for drunken fits and blind billiards—I guess you remember that mule's front legs that had all the skin peeled off'n 'em like hit was bark the time he tried to jump the wire fence—who sewed that up? Never was a scar left. Who sewed up a duck's back that the hound pups tore the skin off in a three-cornered fleek? The duck lived, didn't hit? Take that man's pants down. I aim to look at that cut and if I can I aim to sew hit up."

Radburn started undressin Lake. I went into the kitchen and put a fire in the stove and put water in the tea-kettle. Then I started to huntin fer some white thread and a darning needle. By the time the water het, I had the darning needle and the thread. Radburn had the clothes from off 'n the cut. Hit looked like he had been whacked with a corn-knife. And I said "Radburn, let me look in Lake's overall pockets." I took his overalls—blood-soaked and dirty with green 'backer glue. I heerd somethin rattle in the hip-pocket. And my Lord how hit did stink with that old rotgut whiskey. And what did I find in the pocket on the seat of his britches? I found a broken bottle. "Here's what's cut him," I said, "a bottle. He's fell on hit. A rotgut bottle. If hit wasn't fer his wife I wish hit had cut him in two. He's got as good a woman as ever the sun shined on and out carvortin 'round like this. Drinkin 'round and leavin his family at home. I'll sew him up this time. But never again will I do hit." Radburn looked at Hankas. Hankas looked at Radburn. They never said a word. Hankas looked mean as the Devil out'n his black eyes. "Goin' sew him up, air ye," he looked at me and said. And I said, "Yes I'm going to sew him up if this darnin needle don't break."

By this time the water was warm. I brought hit in from the kitchen. Radburn helt the lamp. I swathed out the deep lash. Lake jist laid there and moaned like a fat hog. Then I put the turpentine on. Hit jist keep bleedin. Hankas give me the chimney-sut and and you'd a laughed to a seen Hankas atter he went up behind the jam rock. He was black as a piece of wet chestnut-burr. I daubed the chimney-sut in the lash. I knowed hit would leave a black stripe under the skin when hit healed over. But I didn't care. I wanted to save him on account of his wife, Polly, and his

five young 'uns. I used the chimney-sut to stop the blood. I poured in the whole bottle of turpentine to keep hit from gittin sore. Then I pulled up the soft sides of the cut and made Hankas hold them while I used the darnin needle. Lake flinched a little when the needle went through his skin. I took thirty-seven stitches on that man. And when I got through, the stitches was jist as even as if I'd been tuckin up a skirt that was too long.

Hankas jist set and looked at me. The Devil was in his black eyes. I had the pistol in my bosom. I jist wanted to git away so he couldn't git the first lick. I kept my eye on him all the time. I said, "Pull his pants back on him and thow that glass out of this room, Radburn. Put Lake in the bed. And I don't want any more rotgut whiskey brought in this house tonight." Hankas said, "Who's runnin this house? You or Radburn?" And I said, "I'm runnin my own house and them that don't like hit can git out." "Us go, Radburn," said Hankas. They staggered out. Hankas said when he left the house, "Poor home, ain't hit, Radburn, when you ain't got a word to say in your own house." Radburn didn't say a word. He turned and looked back at me. Then they went out into the moonlight, around the corner of the house, under the dark night-shade of the hickory tree—down over the hill toward Reek Finnley's house.

They left me in the house with Lake. He was drunk. I thought he would sober up before they got back and want to know who cut him and what he was doing sewed up. But I had the pistol. I could shoot him if he started anything. I went to the kitchen winder. I looked out. The moon was going down over the cornfield where the boys had cut the early piece of corn. The fodder shocks looked like wigwams between me and the moon. I could hear the lonesome whippoorwill. I could hear the katydids out in the dead grass by the cow lot. I could hear the pigs gruntin. I could hear Lake's breath go up and down and then sizzle like the wind going through the dead sticker-weeds back of the smokehouse on a windy day. And then I heerd the dogs bark over at Reek Finnley's house. I went to the back-yard. I looked over at Reek Finnley's place. The house was dark and the moonlight showed on the winder lights. Then I saw the winders lit up with lamplight. I knowed Hankas and Radburn was over there. Then I heerd them talking and cussin around. I heerd Hankas ask Reek if he wanted

a drink and Reek said yes. Then I heerd them cussin some more and runnin the dogs over at Reek's house fer barkin at them. I heerd Radburn say, "I'll git my knife out and straddle that dog's back and cut hit's throat if hit don't shet up that barkin in my ears. I've seed a lot of blood tonight and I wouldn't keer to see a little more."

Well, I didn't want Lake to sober up. I wanted him to stay drunk till morning. So I hunted fer the whiskey jug that Radburn and Hankas brought in the house but didn't take out again. I found a gallon jug behind the door with a sea-grass string run through hit's gill. I got the jug and I went to the right, over from where Pap was a-layin and I opened Lake's mouth. I poured rotgut from the jug with the other hand. I guess I poured a pint down him. He guzzled hit down and licked his lips. Then I pulled the pistol from under the bosom of my dress. I looked at the little barrel. I said, "W'y this can't kill a man. I'd ruther trust my fist. The barrel is too little. Look at this little hole. Look at that big man Lake. Look how big Hankas is. Hit would take a bigger pistol than this to kill him. That barrel ain't as big as my middle finger and ain't much longer." So I took the pistol back to the bed and took the shells out'n hit and put hit under Radburn's piller.

I went and looked behind the mealbarrel and got the double-barrel shotgun. Hit looked more like a gun to me. Long bright-blue barrels glistened in the lamplight. I brought the shellbox from off'n the wallplate. They wan't but two shells in the box. One was loaded with number three shots and one with number fives. I put the shell loaded with number threes in the left-hand barrel fer Hankas. I put the shell loaded with number fives in the right-hand barrel for Radburn. Then I pulled the trunk out and put hit slonch-ways across the corner of the room so I'd have more room to shoot from. I blowed out the lamp and I got behind the trunk. I pinted the double-barrel over the trunk and I cocked both triggers and turned the safety off.

The chickens had begin to crow fer midnight. I staid right behind the trunk with the double-barrel in my hands ready to shoot. I seed the fire in Hankas's eyes. The Devil was in his eyes. I jist waited fer him to come back. I knowed he would want to start something. Well, I heerd him comin. I heerd him come up through the corn-field and cuss about the moon going

down. I heerd him say he fell on the sharp edge of a cornstalk where the boys had cut the potato-patch of corn. I heerd him cuss about the night gettin so dark. Then they come to the door. Radburn opened the door. He struck a match and lit the lamp. Then he said, "Wonder where America is?" And then he hollered and hollered, "America, come here! America, come here! I want some buttermilk. I want fresh water. I want some clean clothes." I never said a word.

They went over to the bed where Lake was. They pulled them up a couple of cheers and set down by the side of the bed. Radburn said, "Wonder if that 'll git all right were America sewed up that place?" Hankas said, "Yes. I'd ruther have her as any doctor that's in Berryville. She's my sister and bad to fight but I'd ruther have her by my side when I'm sick as anybody I know." "Cut on glass, wasn't he, Hankas?" "That's what America said." "Do you reckon she'd swear that if the Law gits us all before the court." "Yes, I believe she would." "Well, he's drunk ain't he? Air you drunk? Am I drunk?" "Git that gallon of licker from behind the door, Hankas, and let's have a snip before we take our shoes off."

Hankas staggered over to the door. He got the jug by the sea-grass string. He took hit over to Radburn. There they set. They wuz jist so drunk they didn't know who hit was in the bed. Radburn put his arms around Hankas. Hankas put his arms around Radburn. Then Hankas said, "You have got a decent woman, Radburn, but she don't treat you right. Now she has left you." "Surely she ain't left me. What will I do about somebody to cook fer me?" "Yes, she's left you." "'I'll see." Then Radburn called, "America, America, come here! I want a drink of water. My head is killin me, America, come here." Pon my honor hit was right laughable. Then he got down on his knees and looked under the beds. He looked behind the meal-barrel. He looked behind the doors. I leveled the gun right on his head. When he moved, the gun barrels moved. I kept the gun right on him.I kept hit right on his temple. He never did git to the trunk. He went back and set down by Hankas. He said, "You're right Hankas. She's gone. She's left me." Now I kept the gun pointed right at them.

Hankas said, "You got a good woman and you'll miss her some. But hit's the best thing for you. You can live right here by yourself and do your own cookin. Lake can stay with you part of the time. I'll come to see

you often. Jist let her go and the Devil take her. You don't need no woman nohow. You can do without a woman more than you can do with a woman. She runs the house. She's hit you with her fist and deadened you two or three times or more than that. She won't do to fool with. Now you can bring the pigpen out here behind the smoke-house and keep the dogs in the back room there at night. You can put your cows in the mule pasture and the mules in the cow pasture. That will make hit closer to milk out there by the sand rocks. You can make hit all right and you'll be a lot safer right here with your childer or without anybody."

Then they became silent. I kept the shotgun leveled about with their temples. The night out behind the winder was blacker than chimney-sut. The whippoorwills kept hollerin. The katydids kept hollerin out behind the smokehouse. I wasn't skeered a bit. I was jist lonesome. God, but I was lonesome. Three drunk men in the house. One of them a brother fer the Devil. I didn't like hit—all the stuff he was tellin Radburn. I didn't want Radburn to run with him and I told Radburn he would git him in trouble. But Hankas jist come up and got him. He can do hit every time. Radburn 'll jist do anything Hankas says. He'll follow him any place. And when he gits that old rotgut whiskey in him he'll do about anything else.

About four o'clock a chicken crowed and Radburn waked from a doze. He said, "Ain't that boy of Reek's a funny boy? Don't he like licker? W'y when I give him that bottle I had to pull hit away from his lips. But poor boy, Hankas. They have to give him pizen to keep him alive. Hit's the God's truth. They feed that boy pizen. He ain't but ten years old and he weighs two hundred and ten pounds. He walks like a string-haltered hoss. Ever notice him? His face is red as a beet. He's marked with a turkey. Before he come to this world a turkey-gobbler flogged his Mama out by the corn-crib one morning. That's what the matter with him." "And you say that he has to take pizen medicine so he won't die?" "Yes, hit takes about all the money that old Reek can make to keep that boy alive. He has that boy that eats pizen and eleven more boys stouter than old Reek is. He has seven girls and they ain't much good." "Well, I'll be dogged." "Reek is a clever man as you's ever about the house of." "Reckon that boy got drunk on the licker you give him?" "W'y, yes, he got drunk and even old Reek had to

hold to the cornstalks to git up the hill when he left us down there in the holler." "Well, I'll be dogged."

I kept the gun right level with their temples. They dozed off again. Lord, how I did pray for daylight. I never closed my eyes for a wink of sleep. I never put in sich a night in all my life. I watched the clock. I could see the minutes was creepin up. I could hear the sparrows workin in the box. Hankas riz up and said, "Radburn, we forgot somethin. Give me the whiskey quick. We have forgot Pap. We ain't offered Pap no whiskey."

Radburn got up and walked over to Pap's bed with Hankas. Hankas helt the jug to Pap's lips and said, "Come on, Pap, and drink with us tonight." Pap waked from a doze and said, "I don't want no drink." "Come on and have one," Hankas said. "Ain't you going to drink with us?" "No, I ain't going to drink none of that stuff. Hit is a sin. The Lord has saved me and I promised the Lord I wouldn't drink no more licker. I aim to be good as my word." Then Hankas turned and said, "I'll be dogged. Lord has saved him and he promised not to drink anymore licker to the Lord. Wonder what the Lord wants fer nuthin. Well, I'll be dogged. My own pap won't drink with me and him so nigh the grave." I kept the double-barrel leveled right on his head. I thought, "If you start anything here I'll git you with a gun this big. Hit will kill you. This ain't no toy 32. This is a gun that will kill." Hankas set down. He dozed off to sleep again.

Of all the snorin I ever heerd in my life hit was from them three drunk men. Of all the strange noises—fiddles, shotguns, mauls, hammers, drums, and axes—I could hear all kinds of noises. I prayed for daylight to come. The sparrows begin to chatter in their boxes. The pigs begin to grunt. The whippoorwill shet up. I could hear the quails hollerin down in the crabgrass. I knowed daylight wasn't fer away. I took the shells out'n the gun. I slipped out the back winder. I come around and opened the kitchen door and come through to the meal-barrel. I put the gun behind the meal-barrel. Then I come into the front room. I took Radburn by the shoulder and I said, "What's all this goin on here. Run me out'n my house last night, didn't you?" And he said, "I don't remember if I did or didn't." "Well, you did," I says. "I stayed in the woods all night. The moon went down and hit was so dark I couldn't follow a path out and you was drunk and took the place." Hankas waked up and I said, "Brother Hankas, you tried

to pour that old rotgut licker down your dyin father's throat. You are a brute." "I didn't do nothin like that, did I?" And the tears jist streamed down his beardy face and dripped off the ends of his beard. He got up and sneaked out home. He couldn't look me in the face.

Lake waked up. He put his hand on his hip and hollered, "Oh Lord God, my hip! Whut is the matter with my hip?" I went out of the room. I guess Radburn must to 'a took his pants down and they both looked at his hip. When I come back in, Radburn looked at me and Lake looked at Radburn. Raburn got the express and hauled Lake home. Before Radburn left with Lake he sneaked up to me and he said, "I'm plagued to death over whut happened to Lake."

I never ast whut happened. I knowed whut happened and I wanted to make Radburn tell me, but he did feel too plagued. We both jist hoisted Lake in the springwagon on a feathered tick and hauled him home to Polly. I felt a little uneasy about maybe a little piece of glass was left in the lash and hit might not heal. But in a few days Lake was walking round. I heerd my boy say that he was in the crick with Lake and his body was allus dirty as a pig on the seat. Radburn looked at me. I looked at Radburn. We never said a word.

THREE REVOLUTIONS IN POETRY

*I. Metaphor and the Tradition**

Cleanth Brooks, Jr.

One of the most radical innovations brought in by the new poetry has been the employment of bizarre or undignified figures of speech. For example, consider the following instances:

> Under this water-lily knee (she said)
> Blood intricately flows, corpuscle creeps,
> The white like sliced cucumber, and the red
> Like poker-chip.

Conrad Aiken's figure is startlingly precise. It is not poetic. Allen Tate is hardly less violent in stretching and recombining elements of more conventional metaphor:

> . . . leaking casements dripped
> Stale lamplight from the corpse of flame.

John Crowe Ransom calls the teeth

> The two-and-thirty cut-throats.

T. S. Eliot likens the evening to

> . . . a patient etherized upon a table.

Some readers have come to accept the violence and abruptness of such figures as a matter of course. Critics whose taste has been formed on the poetry of the nineteenth century continue to protest against them as illegitimate perversions.

* This is the first of a series of three articles on modern poetry. The second, "Wit and High Seriousness," will appear in the autumn issue, and a concluding article will appear in the winter.—*The Editors.*

One may perhaps fairly summarize their objections as follows: (1) such figures are too difficult—demand too much intellectual effort; and (2) they are demeaning—too prosaic and unpoetic. The first objection has as its corollary the belief that the exercise of the intellect is hostile to deep emotion. For example, one loses the emotion in developing the parallels between the evening and Mr. Eliot's patient etherized upon a table. The second objection in turn implies the further proposition that certain objects are intrinsically poetic, whereas others are not. Wordsworth's "Beauteous Evening" with its

> The holy time is quiet as a Nun
> Breathless with adoration

makes use of an object which is exalting and poetic, to wit, the nun; whereas patients under ether are not poetic.

Granted their premises, the conservative critics are within their rights in condemning such comparisons, for such figures do violate the critical canons that have held sway for many years. But they have not held sway forever. Much as the critic may be inclined to say we hold these to be self-evident truths, as a matter of fact, the division of the world into poetic and nonpoetic, and the segregation of the intellect from the emotions, have not always obtained.

The poets of the early seventeenth century were also capable (or guilty) of such violent comparisons, calling them "conceits." The student of literature will recall the abrupt, technical, and daring imagery which fills the poems of Donne, Cowley, Marvell, and the rest of the so-called metaphysical poets. Dr. Johnson had occasion to censure them in his *Life of Cowley,* and he has preserved for us there a collection of conceits: Donne's comparison of a good man to a telescope; Cowley's comparison of a lover's heart to a hand-grenade; Donne's comparison of the soul leaving the body to a chick hatching from an egg, etc.

Perhaps our best approach as critics, therefore, is to try to see these modern conceits in historical perspective. Evidently we are witnessing a reversion to an older type of metaphor. It is beside the point to condemn such figures by the canons which have been in force for the last two hundred and fifty-odd years. What is important to notice is that the canons themselves are being called in question—in short, that we are witnessing a radi-

cal change in the whole conception of the function and fittingness of metaphor, and with it, a revolution in the conception of poetry.

In the seventeenth century, after the extravagant and ambitious flights of the imagination performed by the Elizabethans, there appeared a tendency to prune the luxuriant growth of Elizabethan poetry in the interest of *refinement* and *clarity*. This process was begun by Cowley and Dryden. By the early eighteenth century, it had almost completely purged poetry of the conceits of the metaphysicals.

Addison, in some of his *Spectator* papers, will furnish us with a convenient rationalization of what had happened. The esthetic pleasures, or as he calls them the "Pleasures of the Imagination," fall into two categories. The first type "proceed from the sight of what is *Great, Uncommon,* or *Beautiful.*" They are the emotions which spring from the contemplation of actual, objective experience.

The second type (and here we shall find the pleasure to be derived from poetry) "proceeds from that Action of the Mind, which compares the Ideas arising from the Original Objects, with the Ideas we receive from the Statue, Picture, Description, or Sound that represents them." Addison goes on to point out that

> any Thing that is Disagreeable when look'd upon, pleases us in an apt Description. Here, therefore, we must inquire a new Principle of Pleasure, which is nothing else but the Action of the Mind, which *compares* the Ideas that arise from Words, with the Ideas that arise from the Objects themselves .... For this Reason, therefore, the Description of a Dunghill is pleasing to the Imagination, if the Image be represented to our Minds by suitable Expressions; tho', perhaps, this may be more properly called the Pleasure of the Understanding than of the Fancy [i.e., the Imagination], because we are not so much delighted with the Image that is contained in the Description, as with the Aptness of the Description to excite the Image.

To put the matter briefly, Addison reasons as follows: if the poet gives us a good description of a beautiful woman, his reader will enjoy two pleasures, both the primary and the secondary pleasures of the imagination; whereas if the poet elects to describe the dunghill, the reader will

enjoy only one, the secondary. The most elementary knowledge of mathematics is sufficient to dictate the choice. Presumbably, the wise poet will confine himself to objects which are "Great, Surprising, or Beautiful . . . because here we are not only delighted with *comparing* the Representation with the Original, but are highly pleased with the Original itself."

What is important to observe is that for Addison the poetry resides in the *poetic quality of the materials themselves*. The good poet can do little more than reflect these undiminished. As for the poet who perversely uses unpoetic materials, there is a pleasure to be derived, of course, from a comparison of his representation with the objects themselves, as Addison has pointed out; but Addison hardly allows this to be a pleasure of the imagination at all: "This may be more properly called the pleasure of the Understanding than of the Fancy." We do not have to wrench "Understanding" from its usual meaning to hold that Addison is one of the first to damn such poetry as being too "intellectual." Indeed, it is this pleasure of the understanding says Addison, "that raises the little Satisfaction we find in the different Sorts of false Wit." In the greatest poetry, even what Addison calls "True wit" finds little place: " . . . The Similitudes in Heroick Poets, who endeavor rather to fill the Mind with great Conceptions, than to divert it with such as are *new and surprising* [italics mine], have seldom anything in them that can be called Wit." Addison points out that "Mr. Dryden is very sparing in it. Milton had a Genius much above it."

For Dr. Johnson also, later in the century, the two functions of illustration and decoration are foremost. A simile, he says, must "both illustrate and ennoble the subject." But some of Johnson's statements will carry our examination further.

In the first place, Johnson introduces what amounts to a test for good metaphor. A good comparison is one which is "natural and new, that which, though not obvious, is, upon its first production, acknowledged to be just." Johnson would seem to require the imagination to perceive the justness of the comparison in a flash. It is something of the sort of test which Descartes set up for the truth of axiomatic statements such as "A straight line is the shortest distance between two points." But poetry is not mathematics, and a comparison is not necessarily to be condemned because it does not "come off" in such fashion. If many of Allen Tate's figures could not stand up under

this test, it should give some pause to remember that neither could many of Shakespeare's. For example, consider

> ...his [Anthony's] delights
> Were dolphin-like, they showed his back above
> The element they lived in.

In the second place, Johnson associates the poetic with generality, censuring the particularity and accuracy of many of the conceits of the metaphysical poets. "Great thoughts," he insists, "are always general, and consist in positions not limited by exceptions and in descriptions not descending to minuteness." The metaphysical poet, whether of the seventeenth or of the twentieth century, offends, according to Johnson, by bringing the comparing—the intellectual—faculty into too much prominence. He pursues "his thoughts to the last ramification, by which he loses the grandeur of generality... what is little can be but pretty, and by claiming dignity becomes ridiculous. Thus all the power of description is destroyed by a scrupulous enumeration, and the force of metaphors is lost, when the mind, by the mention of particulars is turned more upon . . . that from which the illustration is drawn than that to which it is applied."

Clearly the key phrase here is "the grandeur of generality." Poetry had come to mean the presentation of certain poetic, that is, sublime, objects for contemplation in an elegant and correct dress, "adorned with majesty and embellished with beauty." In such a poetry the audacious figures of the School of Donne had no place. They punctured the mood of quiet revery by demanding mental agility on the part of the reader; and they fulfilled awkwardly the function of decoration.

We are accustomed to think of the Romantic Revolt as having radically altered the conception of poetry; and important changes of course there were. But as regards the fittingness of metaphor, the *basic* conceptions were not profoundly altered. As Eliot has stated in his *Use of Poetry:* "When it came to Donne—and Cowley—you will find that Wordsworth and Coleridge were led by the nose by Samuel Johnson; they were just as eighteenth century as anybody." The statement is rather easy to prove.

It is true that Wordsworth and Coleridge made an attack upon the diction of eighteenth century poetry, and that Coleridge even used the metaphysical poets in the attack, pointing out the purity and naturalness

of their diction. But Romantic poetry is not distinguished by its use of the language of common men. The outmoded diction of the eighteenth century was merely exchanged for another diction quite as poetic. (The Imagists proved that it was poetic if they accomplished nothing else.) The poetic subject matter of the Augustans was exchanged for other types of subjects. Moreover, poetry became even more emotional—the play of the intellect more restricted. Simplicity of expression was elevated to the status of a cardinal virtue; that is, even greater stress was laid on the belief that the medium was to give the object clearly and simply with a minimum of intellectual effort demanded of the reader.

When simplicity became associated with nature and with the elemental life of the folk, the terminology of the attack on the difficult figure changed somewhat. Such figures were "artificial," or suggested a lack of natural spontaneity. The conceitist could by no stretch of the imagination be the simple peasant singing out of his simple heart.

This censure comes out clearly in the description which Wordsworth gives of the fancy as opposed to the imagination. In distinguishing between them, Wordsworth points out that both are associating or organizing faculties of the mind; but whereas it is the function of the imagination to "incite and to support the eternal," the function of the fancy is merely to "beguile the temporal part of our natures." The fancy trifles; the imagination is about serious business.

Moreover, the fancy is the agent of an impure artistic motive. Compare with Dr. Johnson's comment that the metaphysical poets "were men of learning, and to show their learning was their whole endeavor," Wordsworth's statement that "Fancy depends upon the rapidity... with which she scatters her thoughts and images; trusting that their number, and the felicity with which they are linked together, will make amends for the want of individual value; or she prides herself upon the curious subtilty and the successful elaboration with which she can detect their lurking affinities."

Notice also the materials which Wordsworth assigns to the fancy. "Fancy does not require that the materials which she makes use of should be susceptible of change in their constitution, from her touch; and, where they admit of modification, it is enough for her purpose if it be slight, limited, and evanescent. Directly the reserve of these, are the desires and

demands of the Imagination. She recoils from everything but the plastic, the pliant, and the indefinite." Dr. Johnson would readily agree with Wordsworth on this point; such definite, not to say technical, materials *are* destructive of the "grandeur of generality."

As a matter of fact, Wordsworth was looking for a poetry simple in its expression, and aiming at sublimity as its goal: "In the higher poetry, an enlightened Critic chiefly looks for a reflection of the wisdom of the heart and the grandeur of the imagination. Wherever these appear, simplicity accompanies them; Magnificence herself, when legitimate, depending upon a simplicity of her own, to regulate her ornaments."

The "wisdom of the heart" is, if not anti-intellectual, at least non-intellectual, and demands patent and obvious sincerity, with no trace of intellectual poise and balance, and no hint of intellectual guile. To avoid intellectual guile is all very well, but to avoid the very appearance of intellectual guile—which is what Wordsworth comes very close to counseling—is to risk the opposite danger of sentimentality. Wordsworth's "grandeur of the imagination" is a near relation of Johnson's "grandeur of generality." The search for sublimity, with the poets of the nineteenth century, was not abandoned but continued, and if the line of march leads away from neo-classicism, it at least does not lead back to the School of Donne.

With Coleridge we approach a much greater critic; and moreover, in discussing his use of the distinction between fancy and the imagination, it is necessary to take into account I. A. Richards' brilliant reappraisal, *Coleridge on Imagination,* in which, restating the matter in his own terms, Richards shows that the distinction is central to Coleridge's whole critical position, and defends it as a valuable critical instrument. I am not so much concerned here with the validity of the distinction as such, as with the bias which Coleridge gave it. And that bias places him remarkably close to Wordsworth and even to Dr. Johnson. Coleridge endows with heavy value-considerations the works of the imagination, and then proceeds to narrow his concept of the imaginative figure toward that of the two critics just quoted. For example, he states that certain "rhetorical caprices" of style (with reference to one of Cowley's conceits) consist in

> the excitement of surprise by the juxtaposition and *apparent* reconciliation of widely different or incompatible things. As when, for

> instance, the hills are made to reflect the image of a *voice*. Surely, no unusual taste is requisite to see clearly, that this compulsory juxtaposition is not produced by the presentation of impressive or delightful forms to the inward vision, nor by any sympathy with the modifying powers with which the genius of the poet had united and inspirited all objects of his thought; that it is therefore a species of *wit*, a pure work of the *will*, and implies a leisure and self-possession, both of thought and of feeling, incompatible with the steady fervor of a mind possessed and filled with the grandeur of its subject.

If we are inclined to suspect that in Coleridge's "grandeur of its subject" we recognize still another near relative of Johnson's "grandeur of generality," the suspicion is strengthened when we notice the same prejudice against the ingenious or exact figure. It "implies a leisure and self-possession, etc." The poet cannot have been sincere or serious if he has had time to think up the subtle and ingenious. Here we meet in Coleridge, oddly enough, the principle invoked by Johnson in his censure of *Lycidas*. Moreover "the presentation of impressive and delightful forms to the inward vision" seems to indicate that Coleridge retains the belief in a special poetic subject matter.

If it be charged that one passage of his criticism is here being unfairly emphasized, one can only point to Coleridge's own practice. In his poetry he rarely, if ever, uses the types of figures which Donne and Marvell used. It is true, as Richards has seen fit to remind Mr. Eliot, that Coleridge on more than one occasion expressed his admiration for Donne, but Coleridge does not show Donne's influence in his own poetry nor can he be said to have brought English poetry back to that influence. By and large, poetry was for Coleridge as well as for Wordsworth "the spontaneous overflow of emotion," and any hint of the ratiocinative denies that there has been any overflow at all—merely a careful and ingenious ladling out.

What the Augustan and Romantic critics would say of the figures of some of our moderns is not difficult to surmise. Addison would obviously term Hart Crane's

> As bright as frogs' eyes, giggling in the girth
> Of steely gizzards . . . . .
> The bearings glint

a prime example of false wit. And Ransom's statement concerning a "Painted Head," that it

> Is nameless and has authored for the evil
> Historian headhunters neither book
> Nor state

would clearly be regarded by Wordsworth as the product of fancy, the poet priding himself on the "curious subtilty and the successful elaboration" with which he has detected the "lurking affinities" between headhunters and historians. As a matter of fact, in one of the most recent attacks on the radical moderns, *Sense and Poetry,* John Sparrow clearly indicates that his criteria are those of Wordsworth and Johnson. His first indictment of these poets is their difficulty; his second, that they employ unpoetic subject matter and words. For example, of one of Pound's poems, he asks, "Is it a sequence of lovely images? That will be sought . . . in vain." And his statement that the peculiar appeal of Greek tragedy and epic lies partly in the fact that they "are conveyed in words which for us are soiled by no ignoble use" indicates another item for which he must look in vain in reading much modern poetry.

And what can be said in defense of the moderns? First, that things are not poetic *per se,* and conversely, nothing can be said to be intrinsically unpoetic. Addison's attempt to derive an intrinsic poetic quality from the materials themselves which the poet uses, represents a retreat of the imagination—a retreat which may be traced perhaps ultimately to Hobbes. The poet cannot afford to take the phrase "To hold the mirror up to nature" literally. And if we are to use the term "mirror" at all, it is rather a distortion mirror which the poet carries, or better still, a lens with which he gives experience a focus. At all events, the emphasis must be placed on the poet's *making.* In Donne's famous comparison of the lovers to a pair of compasses, the compasses are poetic in the only sense in which objects can ever be legitimately poetic—they function integrally in a good poem. It is the poet who makes them poetic, not they themselves.

In the second place, the play of the intellect is not necessarily hostile to depth of emotion. Wordsworth and Coleridge are quite justified in pointing out that a light, fantastic playfulness is often served by the methods which what they called the fancy employs. Addison, it is interest-

ing to observe, shared the same prejudice. He confines the legitimate use of mixed wit to "Epigram, or those little occasional Poems that in their own nature are nothing else but a Tissue of Epigrams [i.e., *vers de société*]." In other words, if the poet is frankly light, he may be licensed to be ingenious. This prejudice was still strong enough in our own times to cause Eliot's witty poetry to be labeled *vers de* société. But Wordsworth and Coleridge go too far in implying that only playfulness is served by the methods and materials which they assign to fancy. There are complex attitudes in which there is an interplay—even a swift interplay—of intellect and emotion; and these Romantic critics neglect the possibility that levity itself may sometimes be used to *intensify* seriousness. Shakespeare's mature style, and the "passionate reasoning" of Donne, will yield numerous examples. One may sum up by saying that the methods and materials which Wordsworth and Coleridge confined to the fancy may sometimes be employed to attain heights of *imaginative* power. This is evidently the meaning of Eliot's comment that "The difference between imagination and fancy, in view of this poetry of wit [the poetry of Donne and his followers], is a narrow one." It is narrow enough to destroy the validity of any dogmatic exceptions against the wittiness of our radical modern poets.

If the eighteenth and nineteenth century principles for testing the goodness of metaphor are too narrow, what is to be the test? When is a figure justified? One must not hope for a neat formulation which can be applied *a priori*. Indeed, it is just this *a priori* application of the conventional tests of simplicity and decoration which does most damage at the present. Each figure must be dealt with separately and individually. But some of the values and functions of the radical comparison may be suggested.

Coleridge, in a passage in which he states matters in more elastic terms, says that the true poet will know intuitively "what differences of style it [the imagination] at once inspires and justifies; what intermixture of conscious volition is natural to that state." And so he will. But the modern poet will probably feel that a larger "intermixture of conscious volition" is natural than Coleridge felt, and will probably regard as truly imaginative, figures which Coleridge and his nineteenth century followers

would dismiss as "mere works of the will." Moreover, with the modern poet the value of the figure must in all cases be referred to its function in the context in which it occurs, with the recognition that the range of possible functions is wide: the figure may have a negative function as well as a positive—may serve irony as well as ennoblement. In Ransom's poetry, for example, the ironical function is often to the fore. And here we may submit a test which is about as precise as the circumstances will allow, borrowing it from Richards' *Practical Criticism:*

> Is the pull exerted by the context . . . sufficient to overcome what may be described as the normal separate feeling of the questionable word? Can this pull bring it in, as an item either in accordance or in due contrast to the rest? Or does the word resist, stay outside, or wrench the rest of the poem into crudity or confusion?

The *functional* character of the radical metaphor is to be insisted upon. It is strikingly illustrated by the contrast between Milton's use of the extended figure and Donne's. Compare

> Our two soules therefore, which are one,
> Though I must goe, endure not yet
> A breach, but an expansion,
> Like gold to ayery thinnesse beate

with

> such murmur filld
> Th' Assembly, as when hollow Rocks retain
> The sound of blustring winds, which all night long
> Had rous'd the Sea, now with hoarse cadence lull
> Sea-faring men orewatcht, whose Bark by chance
> Or Pinnace anchors in a craggy Bay
> After the Tempest.

Donne's figure is functional—the poem operates through the comparison. The long simile, on the other hand, is decorative in the largest and most magnificent sense. Take away Milton's similes and *Paradise Lost* (though shorn of much of its pictorial splendor) remains. Remove the conceits from the "Valediction: forbidding mourning" and the poem collapses. The conceit *is* the poem in a sense in which the Miltonic simile, with its emphasis on illustration and decoration, is not.

In general, our modern conceits are the products of a poetic impulse which refuses to sacrifice accurate and subtle description to sublime vagueness, or the criticism of the intellect to unthinking rapture. An important characteristic of the conceit, therefore, is its toughness. It is incompatible with sentimentality. Sentimentality nearly always involves an oversimplification—a segregation of the particular experience from other aspects of experience which might break the favored mood. It involves as a matter of course special poetic elements and the exclusion of the criticism of the intellect. By contrast, the metaphysical poet is thoroughly tough-minded. To give an example, when Marvell compares himself and his mistress to parallel lines,

> Like lines, so love's oblique may well
> Themselves in every angle greet,
> But ours so truly parallel,
> Though infinite, can never meet

he faces the connotations of mathematics and does not flinch from them. The poet has here come to terms with the realism and complexity of his experience. Whatever faults there may be, sentimentality cannot intrude. The obvious clash between the associations of lovers and mathematics is calculated and justified.

These conflicts and shocks in modern metaphor cannot, of course, always be justified. Sometimes the comparison fails to work—the elements refuse to unite; and the shock (for we must not overlook the possibility that it is intended) serves no larger function. But at its best, the accuracy, subtlety, and tension of the radical comparison makes modern poetry a richer and more strenuous exercise of the sensibility than the poetry of rumination and revery which it succeeds.

This interpretation allows us to see our radical modern poets, not as literary anarchists and heretics, but even as the restorers of orthodoxy, attempting to bring back into poetry some of the virtues of the School of Donne. It may help us to realize the extent and importance of the revolution in poetry which they are effecting to compare them with those radical poets of the nineteenth century, Wordsworth and Coleridge. The relation of our moderns to the School of Donne is of the same type as the relation of Wordsworth and Coleridge to the folk ballad. Just as an appreciation of

the folk ballad went hand in hand with appreciation of Romantic poetry, so an appreciation of our own radicals demands an ability to enjoy the metaphysicals, and involves a revision of our whole conception of poetry, a revision certainly no less radical than that sponsored by the *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798.

RECENT POETRY

Kenneth Burke

A SURVEY OF recent poetry should begin with the *Selected Poems of Marianne Moore,* as Miss Moore would merit special honors by the members of her own Guild. It is customary to think of her as adept at expressing a tiny corner of experience—but inasmuch as this corner is close to the very core of poetry, a reader who is willing to meet her work halfway, bringing something in exchange for what he would take, may discover in her observations a quality or method that can be applied to

Selected Poems, by Marianne Moore (Introduction by T. S. Eliot). New York: Macmillan. $2. *Six Sides to a Man,* by Merrill Moore, with an epilogue by Louis Untermeyer. New York: Harcourt, Brace. $2. *Man with a Bull-Tongue Plow,* by Jesse Stuart. New York: Dutton. $3. *Strange Holiness,* by Robert P. Tristram Coffin. New York: Macmillan. $1.75. *Panic, A Play in Verse,* by Archibald MacLeish. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. $2. *Vienna* ($1.25) and *Poems* ($1.50), by Stephen Spender. New York: Random House. *Collected Poems, 1929-1933, & A Hope for Poetry,* by C. Day Lewis. New York: Random House. $2.50. *Dance of Fire,* by Lola Ridge. New York: Smith and Haas. $2. *A Winter Diary and Other Poems,* by Mark Van Doren. New York: Macmillan. $1.90. *Permit Me Voyage,* with a foreword by Archibald MacLeish, by James Agee. New Haven: Yale University Press. $2. *Poems, et cetera,* by David Greenhood. San Francisco: Helen and Bruce Gentry. $1. *Chorus for Survival,* by Horace Gregory. New York: Covici-Friede. $2. *No Thanks,* by E. E. Cummings. New York: Golden Eagle Press, 48 Charles St. $2. *Poems* by Kenneth Fearing (Introduction by Edward Dahlberg). New York: Dynamo. $1.

many matters beyond her particular subjects. "These people liked small things," she writes—and she is one of them—yet behind her miniatures there seem to lie larger equivalents, as a sprawling city is the equivalent of its neat contours on a map, or as one may learn something radical about the history of centuries by watching a few children at play in the backyard. She shows sympathy with little animals, not for their lowliness, but because of their exceptional precision, the "great amount of poetry in unconscious fastidiousness." She describes vessels at sea that "progress white and rigid as if in a groove," or the mountain goat, "its eye fixed on the waterfall which never seems to fall," thereby exemplifying her kind of remoteness: and if she were discussing the newest model of an automobile, I think that she could somehow contrive to suggest an antiquarian's interest. There is nothing more unlike her work than a steamroller, a difference which probably explains why she has included in her collection a withering attack upon one, beginning

> The illustration
> is nothing to you without the application.
> You lack half wit. You crush all the particles down
> into close conformity, and then walk back and forth on
> them.

The great steamroller of political and economic necessities which has been flattening us out may prevent the general public, and even many poets, from feeling the full value of Miss Moore's work. Her linguist subtlety may often be lost on those who were not listening attentively enough to be surprised. Her deft invention of something that might be called the "poetic editorial" may not communicate its savor to us after we have been too violently assailed by the "big bow wow stuff" all about us. And if we read hastily, her conversational understatement may conceal from us the range and boldness of her responsiveness, as in her astounding poem, "An Octopus of Ice." In his introduction to the volume, T. S. Eliot selects the word *genuineness* as the mark of her work. *Greatness,* he says, is a quality for the future to decide upon—but the *genuineness* of a work can be discerned by an author's contemporaries. At a time when people are everywhere climbing upon bandwagons, let me hasten on this issue at least, to climb upon a bandwagon with Mr. Eliot. He writes: "The *genuine-*

ness of poetry is something which we have warrant for believing that a small number, but only a small number, of contemporary readers can recognise." I wish hereby to enlist formally in this distinguished company—and to state my conviction that all those of Miss Moore's Guild, all poets of all persuasions, should vote with me and Eliot for Miss Moore's *genuineness*.

It is not merely a correspondence of name that takes me next to *Six Sides to a Man,* a collection of sonnets by Merrill Moore, with an "Epilogue, by way of advertisement," by Louis Untermeyer. I should not dare to call Merrill Moore a steamroller, after the mean things that have been said about one—and I will admit that nearly every writer must seem somewhat blunt if we pick up his work just after laying down Miss Moore's—but his gusto and dash are wholly the opposite of Miss Moore's meticulousness. Mr. Untermeyer, writing less as editor and critic than as accountant, calculates that Dr. Moore, who is now thirty-one, has written "approximately twenty-five thousand idiomatic, hybrid, or 'American' sonnets." These sonnets suffer considerably from lack of revision—but if you read them as hastily as they were written, hurrying rapidly from one to the next, you will gradually come to see a "way of life" emerging, as the poet details the incidents of his day with an almost gluttonous curiosity. It is modesty on his part to call himself but six-sided. He seems to have as many sides as there are subjects—and what we get is a sequence of quick, haphazard matchings, for he has learned to be engrossed in experience as a clutter. That is: by finding things very *noteworthy,* he can avoid the discouragement of those who find things very *disordered.* This mode of "acceptance" may go far to explain his great vitality.

Dr. Moore is a kind of urban Jesse Stuart. Like the author of *Man With a Bull-Tongue Plow,* he mars the sonnet (the most statuesque of forms) by adapting it to the conveniences of completely impromptu statement, getting something that has fourteen lines, with approximately ten syllables to the line, but is otherwise wholly free to follow the dictates of accident. And he writes with the same rough spontaneity as Jesse Stuart ("blurt out your dreams"), though the world of the Kentucky mountaineer is a much simpler one—and whereas Stuart does not revise because of *naïveté,* Moore probably forgoes revision because of restlessness. Moore speculates easily on much that Stuart would tend to lump together as a

vague forbidding Shape, to be hated as it encroached upon the simplicities of his people, who resent the abstractions of politics, finance, and the law, and who in maturity ask the same protectiveness of the soil as a mother provided them in childhood. "Love in the flesh is greater than the mind," writes Stuart, all of whose poems spring from the most concrete of facts. And it should be noted that this rustic poet, unlike most urbanized poets of the soil, writes poems as full of characters as a novel. Nature for him does not point towards privacy and remoteness, but towards the barn dance. This mind that yields to reverie as it follows the turning sod is well stocked with gossip and local lore, in which the inhabitants of the graveyard still figure because their stories remain a vital part of the community.

The other aspect of Nature (as a place of symbolic communion for a man essentially lonely) is to be found in Robert P. Tristram Coffin's *Strange Holiness*. Mr. Coffin has something of Miss Moore's engrossment in the fastidious ways of animals—but whereas she can consider them primarily as connoisseur, Mr. Coffin for all his admiration remembers that on occasion he must destroy them, when they threaten to crowd him from his farm. His poem, "The Haters," recounting the forms of life (the "dispossessed") that struggle to assert themselves in opposition to his plans and purposes ("It is by the cellar they come first") perhaps gives most clearly the quality of his mind, the way in which comfort and discomfort, kindness and cruelty, are intermingled for him. The poet is made devout by the look of terror in a shot or frightened animal's eye. He can convey to us, quite solemnly, the uneasy expectancy of a summer night, as a storm slowly approaches. The pleasures he celebrates have a touch of melancholy, even when he notes the

> Gentle purrs that came and went
> In the cat stretched out content.

Almost persecutionally encircling him, there is the burning animation of non-human life. Hence he can write a brilliant lyric on bees, "shooting hot from flower to flower"; and his contemplative tributes to a cow being milked are very moving. In "First Flight" he characteristically employs the narrative of an airplane ride purely as a means of reaffirming in a new way his attachment to the soil. Only occasionally does his sombre mythology get too much for us: we may accept it that the spider is not unkind, but simply

industrious and scrupulous in her fashion—yet he does perhaps strain at our limits of endurance when suggesting, in his poem "The Bull Inside," that this turbulent animal has accepted a check upon himself, somewhat in line with neo-Humanist doctrines of decorum, "for the sake of small calves to come." And there are times when his sense of natural awesomeness makes us realize why men have been driven to machines, business, finance, and the state, whereby they may, with distinct relief, contemplate not mystery, but either craft or quackery, not sacrosanct wisdom the thought of which makes us breathe wrong, but the foibles of comedy—not man in nature, but man in society.

Indeed, one might roughly distinguish the tragic from the comic by saying that the tragic deals with man in nature, while the picture of man in society is comic. But one should have to modify this statement forthwith, by admitting that the materials of comedy themselves become tragic when some aspect of society is treated as a *force*. The distinction applies to Archibald MacLeish's new play in verse, *Panic,* which has for its subject a phenomenon so essentially social as a collapse in our financial institutions, yet contrives to give the theme a fully tragic quality. One could only guess why an author as well acquainted with business phenomena as MacLeish, an editor of *Fortune,* should choose to picture a Wall Street crash in so magical a fashion. It is possible that the almost religious accents of fatality present here stem from some desire for symbolic self-immolation on the part of the author. This poem is not written to herald the rise of the masses, but as a dirge for the fall of a banker. The Marxian "scientific" prophecies of capitalist decay are transformed into the tonalities of a Shakespearean soothsayer, or a mystic foreboding of death such as permeates the opening of a play by Maeterlinck. The only fully developed characters are the banker McGafferty and his mistress Ione—and as a matter of fact, one of the most effective scenes in the play profits by the contrast between the super-personal or non-personal quality of the plot in general and the intimate conversation of this couple (the interweaving of private relationships and broad historic trends such as distinguishes Malraux's novel of the Chinese revolution, *Man's Fate*).

No one seems to have noted how greatly the role of the messenger in Greek drama has been magnified in *Panic*. The course of the action

is maintained by a steady bombardment of news: as read aloud by a throng "in a street before an electric news bulletin of the Times Square type—moving words in lighted letters," as read from the tape of the ticker in McGafferty's office, and as received by telephone. While all the world collapses, the organized distribution of public intelligence remains in perfect order. Indeed, we have scarcely witnessed the grim intrusion of The Blind Man and his radical companions in McGafferty's office, before we hear the voices of the people in the street reading the same information from the flicker of the news bulletin. Reports continue to pour in, until the banker finally wilts before the suggestiveness of their climactic arrangement. The logic of life and effort as he knew it is gone—and he is made ready to destroy himself.

The success with which MacLeish has met the problem of writing poetic drama makes me very enthusiastic about *Panic*. I consider it no slight triumph for a man to take a current issue, surrounded with the most realistic connotations, and treat it in a style neither pompous nor lame. Here again, I think, MacLeish has solved much of his problem by recourse to news. For many of the speeches that would have been least amenable to poetic formalization (such as lists of bank failures) are given the necessary amount of distinction, while still seeming "natural," by reason of the fact that they are phrased in the tone of headlines or telegrams. When the people from the street are reading from the bulletin, or Immelman is reading from the ticker, the correspondence is of course complete. But again and again we find the plot upheld by information or judgments whose expression gravitates about the conventions of news-writing. For this reason lines can seem "natural" even when begining bluntly with nouns (the appropriate definite or indefinite article being omitted), and when marked by forms of ellipsis totally alien to conversational syntax (as when a character says: "He helping is hope").

MacLeish asserts in his introduction: "The classical rhythm equivalent to American speech would be more nearly the trochee or the dactyl than the iamb of blank verse." But I hold that this remark really applies most aptly to written forms, the headline and telegraphic styles. Indeed, it is where the plot is carried by monologue (as the plot of history is conveyed in the daily press by monologue) that MacLeish's style truly observes

his injunction to "*descend from* stressed syllables" rather than (as in blank verse) "*rise toward* stressed syllables." The farther his play departs from recitation and the closer it comes to true dramatic dialogue, the stronger is the tendency of the ear to hear the lines as iambic, regardless of his typographical divisions. But as evidence of how subtly MacLeish elaborates the headline conventions, and as corroboration for my belief that in his reliance upon news (both as the core of his dramatic causation and as the key for his style) he has solved the poet's problem of acquiring both *conventionalization* and "naturalness" at once, I might quote this fragment from a speech by The Blind Man:

> Knowing
> Never for what fault or
> Failing of ours is altered the
> World's future suddenly—
> Spilling of what blood:
> Thing done or not done:
> Holy duty forgotten—
> Knowing neither the fault nor the
> Finder—nevertheless
> We know well His messenger!
> Death we have always known!

MacLeish writes that "the rhythms of contemporary American speech . . . are nervous, not muscular; excited, not deliberate; vivid, not proud." Which may or may not be true—but as I read the above verses, I felt that their peculiar quality of "nervousness," "excitement," and "vividness" was not that of *speech* at all, but the strange mixture of jerkiness and fluency that impresses one when following the galvanic convulsions of a news ticker.

A poet's symbols probably aim at "condensation" in this way: If he had had a certain attitude towards his parents at one period in his life, and if at other periods he had had an attitude of the same quality towards his companions, his studies, his art, and finally his politics, he might attempt to "integrate" himself by inventing symbolic devices that telescoped all these segments into one. Thus were we discerning enough, MacLeish's imaginative identification of himself with the banker who wills to die

could probably be traced to the point where his present political emphasis is found to merge with his earlier esthetic one. The symbolism of self-immolation has always been present in his work—and in MacLeish there is a parricidal ingredient. During his days as an esthete, he revealed something of the emotional elements in his *ars poetica* when he likened a good line of verse to the firm resounding of the ax as it sinks into the tree. We may not be extravagant if we remember, in this connection, that the tree is a "patriarch," that it stands as the symbol of shelter and authority (oh woodman, spare it)—hence we may suspect what devious condensations are taking place when this poet, on turning from estheticism to politics, pictures a capitalist leader (a "father"?) made ready to die.

The suggestion becomes more plausible when we note, in the young English Communist poets, a clear attempt at the coördinating of their politics with their earlier family relationships. They talk explicitly of their old quarrels with the father (quarrels which, they hint on occasion, even led to sexual gnarling)—and they explicitly merge this old relationship with their new political emphasis by a somewhat magical doctrine of ancestor-worship. In the surprising reversals of this doctrine, a man intellectually reborn can *choose* his forbears. Thus Stephen Spender, in his recent poem, "Vienna," concerns himself deeply with such symbolic reorganization. "I think often of a woman," he says—and ends the stanza of his tribute to her,

> It surely was my father
> His dry love his dry falling
> Through dust and death to stamp my feature
> That made me ever fear that fortunate posture.

In the men who died fighting at the Karl Marx Hof in Vienna, however, he finds a "father principle" for his new self—and his poem ends

> These are
> Our ancestors.

The same symbolic pattern lies at the base of C. Day Lewis's work. His long essay, "A Hope for Poetry," printed in his volume of *Collected Poems,* begins with a figure of speech quite relevant to my thesis: "In English poetry there have been several occasions on which the younger son, fretting against parental authority, weary of routine work on the

home farm, suspecting too that the soil needs a rest, has packed his bag and set out for a far country." He proceeds to claim "Hopkins, Owen and Eliot as our immediate ancestors." He cites Stephen Spender's poem, "I think continually of those who were truly great," as indication of what "real ancestors" are. And he quotes from Auden's *The Orators:*

> It wasn't till I was sixteen and a half that he (an uncle) invited me to his flat. We had champagne for dinner. When I left I knew who and what he was—my real ancestor.

I most prize in our poets, as distinct from the simple rationalistic pamphleteer, publicist, or economist, the fact that they are alive to the full complexities of human readjustment. Implicit in their work is the knowledge that, with an honest and earnest man, any notable shift of cultural emphasis requires a great deal of "consolidation." A change in political affiliations, for instance, may not be merely a choice of expedients, as the more superficial pragmatists would suggest; it may involve all sorts of other factors grounded in one's past. One may not feel that, for him, the particular concern of the three English poets with their "ancestry" is important. The important thing to me is their clear awareness of the fact that a man's need of "integration" or "fusion" involves factors more complex, and closer to "magic," than rationalistic oversimplifications of political necessities can reveal.

Lola Ridge is similarly concerned with symbolic mergers in her *Dance of Fire,* issued in a cover and jacket of deeply glowing bronze that arrestingly announces the tenor of her work. As for "condensation": in the twenty-eight sonnets of her "Via Ignis" she evolves a kind of dithyrambic metaphysics about the symbol of fire. With Heracleitan thoroughness she finds us "living in a dynasty of fire," "still in the midst of the fire dance," for "the flame that breaks down, fuses and forms is still burning nakedly in humanity." Hence our agitation—to which she holds out the hope that "we may come forth, for a period, into the time of light." Thus we have a universal burning, existence as trial by fire—and we have a transcendent burning, light. Her sonnets are a highly ritualized statement of her key metaphor. By the unifications of her myth, all that is most significant in experience

is drawn together: the "infuriate spark" in us, and in our "blood singing to the ancient horn"; the "tind'rous structure of the heart"; the

lambent menace in the brain,
Too fraught with tensions, which the blood inspires
In radiant passage;

the upheavals of storm, the sea, and nebulae; the "music over heaven"; the sun; the "silver truce," "effulgence on the waters glistering"; " the lion and the burning dove"; the jungle, history arising from the jungle, the Chosen sacrificed for history, and finally, since such rigorous pursuit will usually call forth in some form its own negation, we come to poems on the "Ice Heart," the "vise of glaciers closing," and her apostrophe:

Draw near, O near, to the ice-heart! abase
This blood before the white contagious death
Till it congeal in harmony.

There is no better proof of her deep attachment to her symbolism than the lovely sonnet "Is not this April of our brief desire" (where she Platonically interprets spring as the frail manifestation of some vaster awakening), or in her devout saluting of the dawn. But the full reward of her earnestness is to be seen in "Three Men Die," a tribute which one can justly call exalted, to the secular martyrs, Sacco and Vanzetti, themselves pictured in light, their nerves burnt in the raw electric fire. Many a poet will be found to have made devotional services of his own, semi-private compensations for the lacunae or irrelevance in the symbols of institutional religion. But no one could be more definitely focused upon such effort than Lola Ridge in her recent volume.

If I were required to characterize Mark Van Doren's *A Winter Diary and Other Poems* in but one word, I should use the word "humble." I do not mean that this poet makes a thriving business of humbleness (as the Frenchman Francis Jammes has done quite effectively). I refer to the fact that, when gripped by emotions, the author of these candid poems makes his reports, not with Byronic assertiveness, not with the air of one who would suggest that generous portions are his birthright, but apologetically —with timidity, regret, sorrow, and (at times of encouragement) gratitude. As a consequence, though his verse is lacking in brilliance, it does possess a subdued kind of poignancy. The long opening poem, a modernized exten-

sion of Whittier's "Snowbound" (plus something of the moralistic schedule we get in Milton's "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso"), the record of a city family's sojourn in the country from fall to spring, will not satisfy those who demand that the line of poetry be packed—yet in its unassuming way it suggests the appropriate seasonal moods with penetration, and sets the memory to vibrating. Though mainly a record of mild delights, the poem made me quite melancholy, having as it does so many lines that seemed to me wholly gray ("Slap, slap, the sound of car chains going by"). There is also a sonnet sequence, a troubled account of love, the quality of the whole well pointed in these opening lines:

I said: It will not blow this way again;
The branches of my life too soon are old;
The wind is kind to early-withered men
Lest they remember and confess the cold.
I said, and scarcely knew that it was I,
Hanging my leaves there in the springless year.
I said; and did not listen to a high,
Loud sound of March that filled the woods with fear.
Then it was all around me, till at last
Love like a hurricane of hate was blowing—
Bruising me everywhere. Yet I was fast,
And stood among the ruins of his going.
Only the after stillness came and showed
These blossoms on me everywhere, like blood.

And perhaps not unrelated in essence, we have another long poem, "The Eyes," suggesting an obsession of guilt prior to offense. The many short lyrics reënforce the note of sad decline that seems to motivate the poet's output, one of the best formed being "This Amber Sunstream," which ends

No living man in any western room
But sits at amber sunset round a tomb.

James Agee's *Permit Me Voyage,* which bears the endorsement of a foreword by Archibald MacLeish, I find somewhat difficult to characterize. One must respect it for its firm workmanship throughout, but at the same time one must feel that the poet is still somewhat ambiguous as regards the coördinates he lives by (no great disgrace, as he is still in his twenties).

His "Epithalamium" is an extremely able record of the marriage night, with tactful interspersing of attendant meditations. And a symbolic narrative, "Ann Garner," gives an impressive sense of rigor by picturing the stone-like kernel of silence that fell upon a woman whose child was still-born. "Life was in death," he writes, as he symbolizes purgatorial moods, symbolic curses. The book also contains a long "Dedication" in prose that in Amy Lowell's day would doubtless have been called "polyphonic." A rhetoric of pity and anger, it reveals the great complexity of the issues to which the author is alive, is succinct, and shows considerable canniness of appraisal.

Another volume in the "promising" category is David Greenhood's *Poems, et cetera*. Like most poets of the Southwest, he is much given to visual imagery, to the evocation of vague moods by sharp perceptions. In "The Life of a Hunter," a succession of prose paragraphs, the analogy between girl and deer is drawn out deftly, and with freshness. And one is shaken by the ominous speed of his "Aphorism":

> Westward of the road the white cloud rose,
> Eastward hove the vulture,
> Earthward bowed the high-hung Jew
> Introducing culture.

Much of his verse was obviously written at a time when his energies were not yet fully engaged or directed. They have the melancholy of potentialities unemployed, with the result that poetry has for him too many of the associations that go with incompletion. Hence the harsh decision of his envoy:

> Singers with sacred nerves,
> Mourners for the fallen leaf,
> We are writing tonight too many poems
> Awake with watchman and thief.

Poets should always be ready to vow such treachery—but as they mature, they should find ever maturer reasons for failing to abide by their vow. In Greenhood's case, I should imagine that his aphoristic gift, coupled with the adolescent association that poetry has for him, will most likely lead him into a period of analytic prose.

I must end somewhat "unscientifically" by the mere mention of three other books, which are treated summarily not because they are unimportant (I consider all three of importance) but because I have written about them for publication elsewhere, and I should not feel justified in repeating myself here. I refer to Horace Gregory's *Chorus for Survival* (which I am reviewing for *Poetry*) and E. E. Cummings' *No Thanks* and Kenneth Fearing's *Poems* (which I am reviewing for *The New Republic*). Though sharper in his circumstantial references to the details of his times than Lola Ridge, Gregory resembles her in his turn for metaphysical unification—and I prefer the greater proportion of the critical which Gregory mixes with his sustained musicality. He is wholly at home in the current mode of seeing people *statistically,* noting about the individual his traits as member of a group. The attitude may show in the depiction of long historic movements—or we may find it in tribal migrations so brief as one evening's traffic jam, as in the poem beginning

> Under the stone I saw them flow,
> express Times Square at five o'clock
> eyes set in darkness, trampling down
> all under, limbs and bodies driven
> in crowds, crowds over crowds, the street
> exit in starlight and dark air
> to empty rooms, to empty arms,
> wall paper gardens flowering there,
> error and loss upon the walls.

One will find little current verse of greater scope and pliancy than that of *Chorus for Survival.*

Cummings seems to have got himself into a surprising tangle which keeps him fluctuating between the cryptic and the moony, the comic and the mystically ecstatic—and he frequently grows vindictive in ways that show more fancy and invention than maturity. His satiric gift is crippled by his exaggerated individualism, which a jumble of integrity and pig-headedness has prompted him to intensify in opposition to the current collectivist emphases (he had learned so well the ways of the antinomian that his very aptitudes tend to hold him at this stage). So we find him carrying on a kind of guerilla warfare against all camps, with catch-as-catch-can

tactics finally involving him in anti-Semitic elucubrations that do him no credit. But his tendency to snipe at authority in every form helps his output in one notable respect: by stimulating a sense of isolation, it indirectly prods him to stress a compensatory "oneness" with the dramatic events of landscape and season—and some of his purely descriptive poems are excellent of their kind.

Kenneth Fearing, whose book is very accurately located by Edward Dahlberg's introduction, is almost the exact fit for our needs of the moment. For this reason, like a cartoonist he is limited in the range of his devices—but within this range he attains great suavity (the tonality of plaint and brooding that underlies his slang making for ceremoniousness). And there is no contemporary poet who is neater at noting with ironic corrosion the grotesque injustices of our ailing economic structure, in the "flophouse, workhouse, warehouse, whorehouse, bughouse life of man."

SOME NOTES ON NEW FICTION

Howard Baker

These novels range from a great work through several original and considerable books to examples of this season's market product.[1] They are the accomplishment of varying degrees of talent, and security, both physical and mental. To review them together is perhaps unfairly to crush the lesser under the greater; yet each has its validity, great or small, as a product of the present world, and to group them is to make them define one another and to relate them to their world.

[1] *Joseph and His Brothers* and *Young Joseph,* by Thomas Mann. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50 *each. Heaven's My Destination,* by Thornton Wilder. New York: Harper and Brothers. $2.50. *Hacienda,* by Katherine Anne Porter. Paris: Harrison (*limited edition*). *He Sent Forth a Raven,* by Elizabeth Madox Roberts. New York: The Viking Press. $2.50. *Puzzled America,* by Sherwood Anderson. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.50. *In Their Own Image,* by Hamilton Basso. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.50. *Siesta,* by Berry Fleming. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co. $2.50. *I Am Jonathan Scrivener,* by Claude Houghton. Garden City: Doubleday, Doran and Co. $2.50. *This Was Ivor Trent,* by Claude Houghton. Garden City: Doubleday, Doran and Co. $2.50. *Taps at Reveille,* by F. Scott Fitzgerald. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.50. *The Harsh Voice,* by Rebecca West. Garden City: Doubleday, Doran and Co. $2.50. *Ollie Miss,* by George Wylie Henderson. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co. $2.50.

I

Joseph and His Brothers, a trilogy by Thomas Mann, of which the second volume *(Young Joseph)* has just appeared, is undoubtedly a masterpiece. This is said with the hesitancy with which one must consider a still incomplete work and a translation. But the excellence of H. T. Lowe-Porter's translations is an accepted fact, and the evidence of Mann's greatness in these volumes is abundant.

Thomas Mann takes his "plot" from Genesis. Action begins with Joseph as a beautiful youth, gifted and spoiled, exploiting his power over his fond parent, Jacob. Then we leisurely look backward in time at Jacob and Esau as young men, at the humiliations which long purposes entailed upon the thoughtful Jacob, and at the thoughtless, capering Esau whose life was as merry as a goat's. Then is narrated the destruction of Shechem by the savage brothers, Simeon and Levi; and then the hoax whereby Jacob obtained the blessing of Isaac. There follow Jacob's flight to the house of the guileful Laban, his peculiar marriages, his attainment of prosperity, and his loss of Rachel. The second volume centers upon the egotism of Joseph, which was at once justified and yet unendurable to his brothers, and the suffering which it brought to Jacob, because he had too much indulged the boy, and to Joseph himself. The third volume is to contain the account of Joseph in Egypt.

The story makes no real departures from the Biblical narrative, the method of the fiction being the establishing of motivations for the events mentioned in the chronicle. Thus Jacob, realizing that his excessive devotion was responsible for Joseph's bad manners and the resulting fraternal discord, hopes to make amends by sending Joseph laden with compliments to the brothers in the fields; and thus, when the boy is lost, Jacob suspects the brothers but, because of this same sense of guilt himself, dares not allow himself to accuse them. He can however mask accusation as distracted grief and cry out to them: "Where is Joseph?" By another analysis of motives Isaac is portrayed as not unaware of the trickery by which Jacob obtained the blessing: and Esau, consequently, is thrust into a vastly ironic situation. As a whole the action in these volumes is splendid in detail, dramatic, and absorbing.

In enlarging upon the Bible, Thomas Mann pursues what might seem at first glance to be a paradoxical method. He utilizes the new findings of archaeology along with the ancient supernaturalism of the Scriptures, so that scientific data stand side by side with miracles. By using the methods of modern psychology, which are at least popularly associated with iconoclasm, he does not destroy the traditional dignity of his characters but rather increases it. The characters themselves are at once individuals and types—types, that is, which are larger than life size and not, unlike most fictional types, smaller. All this will cause the poorly equipped reader to imagine that this work is shot through with contradictions—realism with fable, the sacred with the profane, science with religion. Actually this book is considerably above such contradictions.

The question is how it can be so, and the answer may be derived in part at least from Thomas Mann's treatment of a specific conception, that of the past. Time, it will be remembered, enticed Hans Castorp in *The Magic Mountain* to cast out many a net of speculation; and now in this book a certain view of time—that is, of the past of this world—becomes the root which nourishes the whole story. It is the subject of the long prologue; the book opens with these sentences:

> Very deep is the well of the past. Should we not call it bottomless?
>
> Bottomless indeed, if—and perhaps only if—the past we mean is the past merely of the life of mankind . . . .

And Mann proceeds to sound the depths of the past which is known to us. He considers the dim records of the Adams who preceded the Biblical Adam, the Edens which anticipated Eden, the great floods among which that of Noah must have come late; and he evokes the sense of other people and events lying farther back in time, but now totally forgotten.

Now to think of the past strictly in terms of the life of mankind is more difficult than it seems. One can scarcely avoid becoming abstract. Mann, probing backwards some six thousand years, sees how inquiry fades out in the unutterably remote. He knows abstractly, on the other hand, that the human species has existed for, say, six hundred thousand years. Science, until recently, was likely to stress the latter figure, which from the human point of view is a meaningless abstraction, and to ignore the former. Thomas Mann has overcome this sort of error; his science is the instrument of wis-

dom, of such understanding that recognizes no contradiction between the scientific and the spiritual. For him the past in its greatest reality contains both "facts" and "miracles."

Everyone knows how prone to shallow compromise is the desire to reconcile science and religion, and how dangerous are the paths towards a humanizing of science. The problem—the chief one of our time, for science should be understood to include economics and the like—is itself still in the process of taking form; even the terms involved must be perceived in continuously new lights. Therefore these notes can do little more than recommend a thoughtful reading of Mann's pages, and assert that they are of unparalleled interest.

It is not so difficult, however, to show how Mann's creation of a lively vision of the past contributes to the pattern of his story. The eye which roams over so many centuries has the advantage of great perspective; it sees that people are essentially alike and that events are essentially repetitions of earlier events. Thus Mann creates a fresh feeling for the unity of mankind and for destiny; and thus Adonis can become a beautiful prefiguration of Christ. But men, though essentially alike, also fall into groups, within which the individuals may be so similar that they are practically repetitions of one another. So it is with Eleazar and his forbears; and Jacob identifies himself, willingly and consciously, with Isaac and Abraham, while Esau becomes a copy of Ishmael. Distance, in other words, emphasizes essential features: the people of this tale loom up in the distant past as the prototypes of humanity.

We have in these volumes, then, the spectacle of a great German writer, an exile from his country, calmly striving to delineate the basic unity of mankind, using for his purpose a people whom his people despise, showing that the admirable individual is not one with hair and eyes of certain colors but one who has mastered a self-consciousness, a form or a harmony which embraces his mental and physical life. Such self-consciousness, this German seems to say, is nurtured by a profound meditation on the past, by reliving for a kind of experimental purpose the lives of one's fore-runners, even by identifying oneself with the past, but with such criticism and selection that the past is re-created until it resembles the future and indeed is

capable of showing one one's way into the future—how similar superficially this is to the Nazis' worship of the past, and how totally different!

And indeed the pure dramatic line of this work has equally great implications for our times. The tale turns upon the transmission of the blessing which originated with Abraham and which foretold that the sons of those upon whom it descended, besides enjoying many an extravagant advantage, should become a destiny. It was of obscure import, but it compelled a passionate regard for the future. Concern for it inspired the disastrous discord among Jacob's sons, even as it had inspired that between Jacob and Esau. But this destiny, despite human failings like that of Jacob in his devotion to Joseph, would be fulfilled according to the plan of God—a plan which Jacob labored constantly to understand and to further just so far as he was able. Rachel, too, is characterized by "readiness." So the motivating force in these volumes is a will toward the future, towards the working out of the blessing. Thomas Mann has called the will towards the future—"the will that leads future-wards by the path of consciousness and resolution"—has called it the revolutionary principle. In a world which is almost paralyzed by reaction, *Joseph and His Brothers* is a mighty vindication of revolution.

It is also a great work of art. It develops the splendor of the primitive on a scale comparable with that given the company of Satan's heathen followers in *Paradise Lost*. Indeed, if one consider the peculiar magnitude of the characters and the freshness of the grasp upon a conception of destiny and the will—features which are treated so freshly and passionately that they seem to be direct outpourings of conviction—this work must be judged, and approved of, as an epic more than as a novel.

II

The novels of Elizabeth Madox Roberts have been built upon broad lyrical themes. In her first book, *The Time of Man,* the theme was permanence in its simplest form: farming was an unchanging way of life. The seasons repeated themselves; the land seemed to be permanently fruitful. Life was reduced to birth, growth, toil, childbearing, death—a cycle which never varied in any important way. The events of the tale, like the journeys from one farm to another, formed a pattern of repetitions; the people were folk rather than individuals—hence the predominance of colloquies in which the speakers are not individualized. Change, since it appeared in the form of an

occasional inexplicable happening such as a burning house or a broken leg as well as death, only contrasted with and enforced the vision of the fundamental permanence of things. *My Heart and My Flesh* had as its theme the reverse of permanence; in it every event is an inexplicable happening. And in addition the central character is made to discover that her world was completely disrupted by sexual irresponsibility. The order which this woman attains at the end of the book rests once again upon a view of farming as a life of calm and desirable permanence.

This permanence or its opposite is *sensed* in the world; it is not thought out, not criticized, but is perceived directly by the people in Miss Roberts' earlier novels. Since it is equivalent to a "feeling about things," it is an arbitrary attitude: in the one book the world is permanent and orderly though full of sorrow, while in the other the world is in a state of continuous and violent disruption. These books, in other words, turn upon emotional generalizations, and the people in them are likely to be merely nervous systems, creatures of valid and important feelings but lacking in self-consciousness and in intellectual grasp upon themselves. It is a fact that a discovery of gross sexual irresponsibility may upset one's feelings about the world, but it ought not to destroy one's understanding of the world, and in the end the understanding ought to correct the feelings. Miss Roberts' people do not understand; they simply fly from the unpleasant to the pleasant.

Yet Miss Roberts' interests and aims, it is apparent, are similar to those which we have been examining in the work of Thomas Mann, and her scope is admirably large. Her sense of permanence leads her to stress repetitions of events, just as does Mann's preoccupation with time. But, characteristically, whereas time becomes a highly wrought conception in *Joseph and His Brothers,* time as it is used in the title *The Time of Man,* is a spontaneous, lyrical perception, the thought of a girl who is gathering rocks in a field on a beautiful summer afternoon, and is really a perception of the quality of a present instant:

> The rocks fell where she laid them with a faint flat sound, and the afternoon seemed very still back of the dove calls and the cries of the plovers, back of the faint dying phrase, "in the time of man."

Similarly Miss Roberts senses her people as generalizations, while Mann makes prototypes of his; she, too, in her way, is interested in the individual

and the community; and her concern with evil irresponsibility is a concern with Esau-like traits. The difference is that Mann does not limit himself to a feeling for these matters. Miss Roberts until recently has so limited herself; consequently, though her work has often been powerful page by page and very beautiful indeed, as the sentence quoted above indicates, still it has never attained more than a lyrical soundness.

This basic lyricism accounts for the main features of Miss Roberts' art, and it makes these features at once assets and at the same time potential liabilities. Lyricism is arbitrary; when it must be sustained to book length, it may turn artificial or affected at any moment. Lyricism is a reproduction of the feelings of an observer; its predominance necessitates a loss of clarity in thinking and in narration. Lyricism demands a limited point of view, one of a girl like Ellen Chesser. It flourishes only with a very general and therefore vague theme; but once a suitable theme is established, then a wealth of sense perceptions can crowd one after another upon the pages; everything becomes relevant, and the sentences take on a characteristic and not unlovely looseness:

> She was leaning over the clods to gather a stone, her shadow making an arched shape on the ground.

The greatest danger in prose lyricism, however, is the tendency seriously to confuse one's feeling for things with the things themselves. Thus a feeling for people or a field or a cow may cause one to make false and turgid objectifications of these feelings, so that people become Mankind, a field becomes the Land, and a cow becomes the strong still Beast. This is a form of the pathetic fallacy. When Miss Roberts loses sight of the naïve lyrical point of view, it is a fault in her work.

It is a conspicuous fault in *He Sent Forth a Raven*. For Miss Roberts' latest novel is in the main quite unlike her earlier books. It is based finally not upon a lyrical generalization about the world but upon a thoughtful concern with the problems of contemporary society.

Although the central character in it, Stoner Drake, attempts to withdraw from the world by making a vow, before the death of his wife, that he will never, if she dies, go out of his house, the world comes to him. There come to work for him on his Kentucky farm a tramp preacher who recites Genesis and who represents faith in the fruitfulness of the earth; and a

carpenter-philosopher who upholds a poetic but apparently fruitless agnosticism. These two are in conflict; they seem to signify two conflicting inheritances from the past in America. The Great War comes; its fury is brought to the house by an act of rape committed by a young soldier, a member of the family. The economic collapse follows; it is realized principally from the point of view of another young man, one trained in scientific farming and an advocate of a socialistic order. In the end Stoner Drake gives this young man the management of the run-down farm, which is an apt symbol for an economically run-down nation. Drake does this for practical ends; he also keeps by him the man who preaches Genesis. Thus the book seems to point two ways: it leans on the one hand towards a scientific-socialistic economy, and on the other towards a lyrical naturalism, a faith in the permanent fruitfulness of the earth.

So it appears that Miss Roberts has been unable to choose between her new awareness of society and her old lyricism. She tells the story as she did in *The Time of Man,* from the point of view of a girl. The result is that this girl's sense perceptions and lyrical fantasies are completely irrelevant to the main business of the book; and since they are irrelevant there is most conspicuous in them only a mannered style. The same thing is true of the colloquies of the folk, of the rhetoric which is borrowed from Genesis, and of the continuous recurrence of the kind of naïve question which was suitable to Ellen Chesser—What is mankind?—What is the best part of a man? —What are comets for? On the other hand there are a half dozen people who, in spite of this haze of rhetoric, attain an imposing significance, and have a greater depth than the people in the earlier books. This is possibly a transitional work; doubtless the enlarged view of society compensates for the lyricism which is no longer appropriate.

Sherwood Anderson has written tales and novels of noticeable pungency. Perhaps his greatest success has been something like Miss Roberts'—that of recording sense perceptions. But he can scarcely be said to use a predominant lyrical theme with any consistency; experience for him seems to be instead an end in itself, something to be savored over and over again. *Winesburg, Ohio* had this character, though its sex formulations were basically an artificiality; *Dark Laughter* had it in its purest form; in the later books it still underlies social and political interests. In these cases fictional

characters imposed more or less unity upon the sensuous data. And now, with the appearance of *Puzzled America,* the question is whether Anderson has the same success with sketches in which experience is not held together by a fictional character. The sketches do contain a general and indeed obvious truth—that the people of America are facing the depression with great varieties of confusion, despair, and hopefulness. But to consider this book as writing is to encounter not inconsiderable difficulties. The reader, being deprived of the illusions of fiction or poetry, begins to question the mannered style, the rambling method, the personal note, the loud generalization. And the same reader is likely to be discontent with many notions in this book—that a loosely organized country should be treated in loosely organized prose; that a wanderer should necessarily wander in his thought; that a man can protest that he is a common man and not set himself off by his protestations; that a groper can be conscious of and content with his groping; that subjects of enthusiasm like the Machine and the Land do not require rational criticism; that the art of writing is related to the pleasure of sitting on a rock in the sun while writing.

III

Heaven's My Destination is a study of a type, the exhorter, an American product originating in the Baptist Middle West. George Brush, the subject of Thornton Wilder's study, is a traveling salesman. He is an exceptional salesman in that he is rigorously conscientious in his efforts to place his textbooks and is moreover a relentless moral and religious fanatic. During his trips down through the Mississippi valley he exhorts all who cannot escape him, to embrace his views on the Great Matters—God, the American home, alcohol and tobacco, motherhood, money, and the like. He is a tall solidly-built young man, the strongest ever tested in the gymnasium of his small college, and he has a fine tenor voice.

Thornton Wilder casts this study into the form of the picaresque novel, the plot being little more than an account of George Brush's misadventures during the twenty-fourth year of his life. Brush, aside from his activities as reformer and salesman, is in search of a farmer's daughter with whom he once slipped into folly; he finds her and, believing that marriage alone can rectify their folly, he forces her to marry him. For reasons which he is incapable of understanding, he proves to be an unendurable mate;

his American home collapses most sadly, though his ideal remains in the end unshaken. Meanwhile he has been twice arrested, once for propounding views on money, which, being misunderstood, start a bank crash; and once for reasoning with a holdup man and allowing him to escape. He has also been the victim of practical jokes, tricked into getting drunk and consorting with prostitutes. In the end, though he conscientiously abandons one or two points in his code, he has learned nothing.

If we grant the justice of using the picaresque convention with such a subject as Brush, this is an enormously fine book. The story is told objectively; it is a sequence of scenes built out of conversations and summaries of action; there is no commentary, and the presiding critical point of view is only implicit. This kind of writing has seldom been done better. The scenes, while perfectly natural and real, are contrived to show Brush from every possible angle. The conversation is brilliantly witty and yet relevant, perhaps a little heavily realistic in the mouths of the boys at Queenie's boarding house; but as a whole quite unsurpassed by that of any of the writers who have been celebrated lately for their abilities with conversation. The minor characters are vigorous creations; some, like the movie director, seem incomplete; most, however, have a startling liveliness, and Jessie Mayhew for one, in view of her complexity and the economy with which she is treated, is a notable achievement. Mr. Wilder is perhaps our greatest craftsman; few other writers have so excellent a gift for setting characters in motion, and so nice a sense of what to condense and what to expand.

Still *Heaven's My Destination* lacks much. One doubts that the picaresque convention is suitable to it. A simple account of the ludicrous misadventures of George Brush might very well be satisfying if Brush were a rogue or a fool, or simply a cracked salesman. But he is decidedly more than that. He is the kind of spiritual anarchist that an uncivilized Protestant democracy must logically produce, that it, in fact, does produce only too often. He is the extreme individualist: he agreed with no man whom he knew; he is deprived of that sort of support which enriches the people in Thomas Mann's novel—transmitted forms of conduct, systematizations of values. He grew like a weed from his environment. But he is most certainly also an objectification of a tendency in all human beings, which is, after all, only the tendency to be too serious. Such seriousness, however, is basically

admirable, and Americans like Brush can of course attain some sense of proportion. "Of all the forms of genius," the motto of this book observes, "goodness has the longest awkward age." It is unfortunate that Brush is denied a normal growth.

Indeed the last page of this book, with the statement that Brush continued in his awkward adventures, is only glib. It does give a superficial neatness to the tale, a quality like that which was a recurring blemish in *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*. But Thornton Wilder has gone far beyond the earlier book; in his present work, though he draws a protagonist whom he denies a drama, he has devoted brilliant craftsmanship to the study of a significant type of person.

Hacienda, a novelette by Katherine Anne Porter, is in effect a leisurely and sensitive person's journal of a visit to a Mexican hacienda where from time to time, when conditions are right, a motion picture is being made. The author seems to be intent upon reflecting, reflecting in the timbre of the prose rather than dealing directly with, the quality of the hot climate, the decay of a feudal society, the flare with which diverse people —primitive Indians and "modern" Spaniards, Russian camera-men and their American business manager—move in and out of the author's attention. The action in the record hangs very loosely upon the question whether an Indian actor will be released from jail so that the filming can go on.

Miss Porter succeeds beautifully in capturing the elusive properties of people and things. Her style carries with it an abundance of overtones. She seizes upon aspects, savors them and drops them, writing only very rarely an extended dialogue or a dramatically complete scene.

> Carlos came round and shook hands with me . . . He was full of humanity and good humor about Justino and his troubles. "These family love affairs," he said, "what can you expect?" "Oh, no, now," said Betancourt, uneasily. He laughed his twanging tremulous little laugh. "Oh yes, now," said Carlos, walking beside me. "I shall make a *corrido* about Justino and his sister." He began to sing almost in a whisper, imitating the voice and gestures of a singer peddling broadsides in a market . . .

There is, however, an inconclusiveness in this story, a lack of a bold theme or of a sturdy fable. But page by page Miss Porter's prose is marvelously fine.

IV

A glance at the remaining books will indicate the directions toward which younger writers of intelligence and energy are likely to be drawn. The books as a whole are not very good, nor their aims always the highest. This is true possibly because writers, like all human beings, can be intelligent, without acquiring thoughtfulness, and energetic in a mediocre craftsmanship.

In Their Own Image, by Hamilton Basso, intends to show the stupid immorality of wealthy Americans by recounting the disturbances which a strike brings into their lives. The author skips lightly from character to character, drops into the ruminations of his personages when to do so is an aid to telling his story, and in the end succeeds in exploiting the glamor of this lecherous and detestable group just as effectively as if he were writing with one eye on Hollywood. This is to say that Mr. Basso fails as a propagandist against a corrupt capitalist society. For surely one cannot narrate the escapades of rich madcaps with such relish, with such absorption in commonplace intrigue, and at the same time claim a condemnatory attitude. Mr. Basso's fictional method is really to blame, however; for it forces too close an identification of the author with the fictional character.

Siesta, by Berry Fleming, is a very similar book, though its aim is realism. It is also experimental to the extent of interpolating newspaper headlines and introducing a weather man as a peg on which to hang some unconvincing generalizations about the effect of the climate. Its many characters become involved with a fatal woman, infamous newspaper men, a shooting, blackmail, and an abortion followed by death; and matters wind up in flight and suicide. Realism, of course, always gravitates towards some positive attitude; here it falls pretty far into common sensationalism.

Both of these novels are laid in the South. Background, however, has no bearing upon Mr. Basso's story because the people are treated as members of abstract groups, either they are part of a wealthy society or they are striking mill-workers. In *Siesta* there is stress upon the background, a small city in Alabama. Physically the scene is sufficiently convincing. Yet—

it seems to one who is not a Southerner—the people are not Southerners in any distinctive way: they are instead a fatal woman, newspaper men, an abortionist, an effeminate dancer, a doctor who sometimes treats his friends' negro servants for syphilis—they are vehicles for sensationalism. This book is another *Grand Hotel;* the types in it are commoner to recent fiction than to any actual region.

Claude Houghton, a young Englishman, writes what might be called an intellectual mystery. Both *I Am Jonathan Scrivener* and *This Was Ivor Trent* are concerned with a group of Londoners who are under the spell of an absentee man of genius. The mystery is, who is this great genius? Trent, it turns out, is a novelist "who knows everything"; he is also laboring upon a vision of the Future Man—the Future Man, a combination of great intelligence and physical grace, who alone, we are told, can pull the world out of the unpleasant muddle into which it has fallen. But before we are initiated into this bit of mysticism, through many a "maze of conflicting thoughts and emotions" we wend our not entirely uninterested way.

A more direct aim at entertainment is apparent in the work of F. Scott Fitzgerald, who collects the stories which he has produced through a number of years in *Taps At Reveille.* They are mostly slight, but mostly written with a nice economy. The habitual formula seems to be this: a young man confuses a girl with an ideal. In some aspect of the feminine form he seems to see goodness, or social poise, or professional security, or physical deftness—some conspicuously contemporary value which he yearns to possess within himself; he is always a little dissatisfied because the pretty cheek is not the same as the really unrelated ideal. This, while it is a genuine youthful characteristic, is of more use as a formula for pleasant light fiction than as a criticism of life. The four stories which Rebecca West collects in *The Harsh Voice* are in the main slow and careful tracings of the inner lives of people. Whether these people are interesting, or whether the pictures of their minds are interesting is dubious. In one instance the subject for study is a newly wealthy man in his relations with his wife and his mistress; the crash comes, and his wife fails him but the mistress turns out to be pure gold. There is no inner life in the people of *Ollie Miss,* a novel by George Wylie Henderson. Ollie, a negro girl, a "hand" working for negro farmers in the far South, is presented as a portrait of poetic animalism. Although the story

breaks down in the analysis of the girl's basic characteristics and in the treatment of her final decision to live for her unborn child, it is in the large a simple and charming portrait in an excellent background.

V

Any conclusions drawn from these books must be platitudinous. In connection with the last group of novels, the methods of commercial fiction —the motion picture kind of fiction—are obviously a bad influence. In some of the others, there is an unhappy exploitation of a mannered style. Elizabeth Madox Roberts and Thornton Wilder and Katherine Anne Porter, in quite divergent ways, are potentially great. And Thomas Mann demonstrates that greatness is attainable in our times and in our world, now as at any time.

PRODIGAL

John Donald Wade

MR. SINCLAIR LEWIS has pronounced Thomas Wolfe's writing so deep and spacious that it deals with the whole of life. Undeniably it is very deep and spacious; but it hardly deals with everything. Religion, for example, however vestigial it may seem to be in the contemporary world, was, as late as 1884, in Asheville, North Carolina, a force that moved weightily and in general in worthy directions. It is highly probable that in 1935 it may still be found here or there performing nobly. It is even possible that in 1984 it may in one form or another be among the dominant forces of the world. Yet, for all of Mr. Wolfe's testimony, religion might never have existed to any good purpose. Like the waiter he tells about in the café at Nice, he apparently thinks of himself (and of everybody else, in fact) as not susceptible to religious sentiment—certainly not to ecclesiastical sentiment. Now, this is all very well for a way of thinking, but it does not fit in cleanly with gusty paeans about catholicity, and about the splendor of a young man's wanting to experience everything—oh, *everything*.

The insatiate young man who is the hero of both of Mr. Wolfe's novels, *Look Homeward, Angel* (1929) and *Of Time and the River** (1935), is named Eugene Gant, and he is referred to in the third person except at rare times when the disguise somehow lapses and the hero becomes quite frankly Thomas Wolfe—"I," the text has it, "did this or that"; "reaching through

* Charles Scribner's Sons. $3.00.

the darkness she touched *me,*" and so on. Both of the books relate primarily, then, to the author himself. Substitute his name for his hero's, and substitute Asheville, North Carolina, for Altamont, Catawba; and the identification is pretty thoroughly accomplished.

Eugene Gant was born in Altamont, Catawba, in 1900. He was the last of a large number of children born to a dissipated and impetuous but lovable and generous father—a Pennsylvania-born, Baltimore-trained stone cutter, and to a penurious, industrious mother, member of the prolific, sturdy family of Pentlands, native to Western Catawba for several generations. The first novel makes clear the origins of the boy's parents, but news of his gestation is given on the twentieth of the 626 pages in the book, and from that time till the end—here he graduates from the State University at Pulpit Hill—Eugene dominates the story. He and his observations and experiences and sentiments are, indeed, all that is offered. Characters drift in, manage to assert themselves for fifty pages or more, and drift out again; except by lucky chance, Eugene only endures. And he endures with the utmost intensity and turbulence, unable, unwilling—even unaware of the obligation—to believe that he is not the absolute pioneer in living. Neither he nor anybody else is ever for an instant merely so-so. Nothing is merely so-so. Life is a flame that BURNS.

The same flame BURNS in the second novel, for five years, through 912 pages. Eugene leaves Altamont for Harvard; remains there for three years; returns home; teaches English, to young Jews, mostly, at a college in New York City; week-ends, once, (nearly one-sixth of the book) with some Hudson River plutocrats; spends a long time in England and France; gets on the boat to come home. People drift into his life and drift out again. There is much, much talk of them; and they are no more. Until the last page of the second book, only the very dull are not bitterly and hopelessly lost—then, on that last page occurs a miracle—an incredible, unprecedented miracle: Eugene and a young woman who is not named, see each other and fall in love—and then two young people who are quite acutely not dull, oh, not *that,* are acutely not *lost* any more, either—forever.

The two huge novels, covering the time from 1884 till 1925, are enheartening proof of a man's ability, in our time in America, to write

in the grand manner with sustained strength. When Mr. Wolfe's publishers announce that in the last five years he has written two million words, they do not mean to imply that he has necessarily written by some wholly mechanical routine; they mean on the contrary—and they are thoroughly right—that he is a very remarkable person. The two novels already published are part of a series of six, which, completed (two of the others are now ready), will range in time from 1791 to 1933. The whole great collection—and this does not guarantee that it will pass into the popular consciousness immemorably—will undoubtedly constitute one of the monumental performances in the history of American literature. For whatever are the faults of this writer, he has the virtues of stupendous gusto and energy, and quite remarkable omnivorousness. So far, his work has been the record of his own passage through the world. Whether he can transfer his peculiar virtues to books in which he is not himself protagonist, is something that the performance only can indicate.

Whoever writes so much so hurriedly is bound to write something badly. The two novels now published are not impeccable. They are occasionally repetitious and verbose merely. There are rare instances of downright bad rhetoric and there is a considerable amount of trite phraseology. In spite of his ado with *umlauts,* the author lets his American prepossession with spelling lead him into some bad dialect-recording, particularly in the sections of the book that deal with Englishmen. The hero is permitted at times to describe minutely events which in the nature of the case he had observed only fleetingly and cursorily; he uses similes out of experiences which are as yet ahead of him. Sometimes he divulges a too facile knowledge of matters that are highly technical, like medical prescriptions; and sometimes, aggressively cosmopolitan, he is provincially homespun enough to say "reasonable" when he means cheap. But these strictures are against occasional lapses only. In the main, the story is conveyed with subtlety as well as vigor, with a sure implication of the author's really welling power, and a sure and welcome implication of his acquaintance with the great humane tradition of the world.

There is the memory of Greece and Rome and of the Renaissance arts floating across great sections of the writing, and the author's wide knowledge of English literature is forever there, a sort of sounding-board

for all he says. There is a sweeping command of language and vocabulary, and a majesty of style. There is a large and beautiful mysticism, attained apparently by no road yet followed, and toward which no road is marked in these books—a mysticism, then, that is in a sense regrettably selfish. The memory of medieval culture is seldom if ever present; there are no sounding-boards for any except a bigoted and sterile piety. But the richness and depth of the past are more than usually well implied; and for what is offered in that line there must be grateful acknowledgment.

Many old and good tricks and a number of new ones are requisitioned for the reader's benefit; Dickens's method is plain in the scenes relating to the stout lady who set herself up as patroness of the arts at Harvard; Sir Walter Scott's in some of those involving comic relief; Sinclair Lewis's in all of those involving the dictaphone technique; and even Joyce and Gertrude Stein are from time to time suggested—faintly but with unmistakable Wolfeian accent.

The adroitness of the Lewis-like episodes is a commentary on the ease with which that artifice may be acquired—and abused. To devote nearly a sixth of a book that supposedly covers five years of time to the various conversations of a railway journey from Asheville to Baltimore evinces an evil intoxication with one's command of mimicry. But the space given to the superbly reported conversations of the "arty" (and leprous) intellectuals around Harvard University is more to the point; the subject is fresher, and the matter treated has bearing on the central issue of Eugene Gant's development—in its stupid mincingness, its inane irrelevancy, its dead and rotten bawdiness. It has as the author hints, sad bearing upon the development and damnation of us all, and of this nation. This waspish sophistication is worse than the vulgarity of Altamont, the jaunty unconcern of Pulpit Hill, or the surly unconcern of the City College; it is more menacing, because it is more comprehensible, than the jibberish of the intellectual expatriates in France. All of this Mr. Wolfe makes clear. However much space he takes to do so, he is heartily welcome to.

The author is a young man, born thirty-five years ago, and if on many scores he behaves himself still in the fashion of one born considerably later, he is in some ways fortunate, and may be forgiven a good deal. Too often, the folly of youth is supplanted only by the drabness of age; that

should mitigate some of the doubts that might arise concerning Mr. Wolfe's literary manners. But in his particular case, it might not be too sanguine to risk wishing that time, which surely rolls, would roll a shade the faster; he is hardly likely ever to prove drab; and it is not a painful thing to imagine the day when he will no longer utter persistently, with defiant relish, many of the words that still delight him. He may not much longer find the word "guts," for instance, irresistibly fascinating, may not say "whore" as often as he now finds it good to do; may, though continuing to regard himself as basically non-Christian, come to feel that the ejaculations "Jesus Christ" and "By God" are less pertinent than he once thought them in the business of demonstrating one's self safely independent. He may conclude, even, that (mature, at last) he should try the feat of mastering his audience without resort to the hard and raw brass knucks of sex scenes. For about sex scenes there is this: in fairness to his audience, a desperately—oh, desperately—frank and earnest and fearless writer is bound to offer either more detail than Mr. Wolfe offers or quite definitely less. It is not admirable to insist upon the individual whim with volcanic eruptiveness, and to keep all of the exciting lava meanwhile safely, meticulously, within permitted channels.

Mr. Wolfe is very unhappy over the fact that nobody really knows anybody else, and he does not derive comfort from the idea that this was true formerly and will be subsequently, world without end. He says that at twenty-two he was a madman and a fool—and that everybody else at twenty-two is also. He says that to be a great writer a man must be something of an ass. He says that he wants to experience everything, to escape nothing. All of this is very romantic sounding. Yet he long ago ceased to think of Shelley as pre-eminent among the poets; he was properly exasperated, early in his book, to have his family think of him, because he wished to write, as different from the rest of them. Yet, again, he exhibits something indistinguishable from the conventional grade of moral indignation in his attitude toward the drunkenness and perversity of Starwick, and something very close to the aphorisms of Benjamin Franklin (which Babbitt loved) in his attitude toward the importance of getting his work done.

It is surely true, as Eugene Gant declares, that no form of political government will offer surcease from the invisible worm that works unre-

mittingly on man's heart. It is conventional to say that romantic love is sovereign in this regard, and Eugene accedes to the convention; at least he seems to value romantic love as an agency of temporary relief. It is also conventional to say that priggishness is a good remedy; and there Eugene accedes too. It is also conventional to say that religion, sweetness and humility of spirit, a sense of obligation, a regard for the happiness of one's fellows, mental as well as physical—that all of these things, while not curative in this world, are none the less palliative of man's lasting wretchedness. But talk of that order, Mr. Wolfe cannot endure, and, Holy Christ, by the blood-and-bones-of-God, he will not put up with any such s. o. b. twaddling cant, be good-and-God-damned if he will, so help him Jesus! And so on . . . It is not going too far to feel that this is very distressing.

Another remedy for man's pain; older far than sulphur and molasses or than sassafras tea, is the sense of being identified with one's people, of being actually a part, as an oak is, or a cabbage, of the earth from which one derives. It is a remedy highly spoken of, and Mr. Wolfe has evidently had word of it. He discusses it at length in connection with Eugene's disquiet in Europe—his fixed impression that neither he nor any other American could be at ease there—and his belief, which may or may not have materialized, that at home, in America, he would be less tortured.

It is a safe bet that America alone did not solve Eugene's problem effectively. For that large equation is very vague, and the problem involved demanded something definite and pointed. Away from the United States, Eugene might idealize it readily, rhapsodizing over its magnitude and the big, swift trains that go roaring across it. That idealization could not have been ultimately deep. He says in fact that for getting one's work done (that is, one's very best, artistic work, the sort of work that demands the whole functioning of the artist's nature) one place is as good as another. So much for those who feel it necessary to think of home only in terms of a continent. It would be as practical to think of the continent in terms of a cottage, which, for all the fables that science has abolished distance, the continent still very positively is not.

Eugene's friend Starwick was a Middle-Western American, and although he wished himself something else, it was true, as Eugene rightly and unanswerably explained to him, that he could never be a Frenchman,

nor anything indeed except what he was. Well, Eugene is a Southerner, and though the South may not be so culturally alien from America at large as America at large is from England or France, there remains surely, for one of Eugene's sensitivity to recognize (indeed he talks much about it) a disparity between Northern ways and Southern ways. Altamont is assuredly not Mobile, nor is Eugene to be confused with, say, Lucius Rhett—fancy young Lucius, aged nineteen, shrieking to his mother "Now, for God's sake, I don't want to hear what you are saying. God-damn it, can we have no peace?" Fancy that. Oh, Eugene is not Lucius (whether he is better or worse, does not matter here); Eugene for his part forswears the South belligerently—it had jolly well never given *him* anything; he exults in his determination never again to live there. None the less, Eugene is a Catawba, mama-and-papa-saying, Presbyterian Southerner; or he is nothing. And he is very emphatically not nothing.

"Oh, lost, lost!" is the refrain, constantly echoed, that this man from Old Catawba, immured now in Brooklyn, N. Y., cries piteously through most that he has written. It would be an interesting thing, and worthy of much wonder, if in his case this should prove inexorable: that to live validly and with satisfying peace he should be driven to a reconciliation with his origins; should be obliged, in the vast area of his sympathies, to make room for the people who bred him.

SHORTER REVIEWS

Wheels and Butterflies, by W. B. Yeats. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1935. $2.00.

John Gould Fletcher

WHAT, ONE may well ask the critic, does the modern twentieth century and the generation of readers and writers born since 1900 make of such a writer as William Butler Yeats, whose 70th birthday falls on June 13th of this year 1935? It is a question that has frequently been raised, especially since Yeats is, by universal consent, the most eminent poet now writing in the English language, but to find an answer is by no means easy. The latest generation of English poets—such a poet as Stephen Spender, for example—have obviously profited much by study of the Irish poet's later style, that bald lapidary style in which monosyllabic nouns do duty for the polysyllabic adjectives of his earlier mode—but they in no sense share Yeats' subject matter, nor his approach to it. What is it in his work that gives it at once its distinction and its isolation?

The question is surely not answered, or even fairly met, if we consider certain words which Mr. T. S. Eliot has applied to Mr. Yeats, in *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism:*

> There is another danger in the association of poetry with mysticism besides that which I have just mentioned, and that of leading the reader to look in poetry for religious satisfactions. These were dangers for the critic and for the reader: there is also a danger for the poet. No one can read Mr. Yeats' *Autobiographies* and his earlier poetry without feeling that the author was trying to get as a poet something like the

> exaltation to be obtained, I believe, from hashish or nitrous oxide. He was very much fascinated by self-induced trance states, calculated symbolism, mediums, theosophy, crystal gazing, folklore, and hobgoblins. Golden apples, archers, black pigs, and such paraphernalia abound. Often the verse has an hypnotic charm; but you cannot take heaven by magic, especially if you are, like Mr. Yeats, a very sane person. Then, by a great triumph of development, Mr. Yeats began to write and is still writing some of the most beautiful poetry in the language, some of the clearest, simplest, most direct.

One might parallel this statement with some other remarks by the same critic, in *After Strange Gods,* to the effect that Yeats showed a bad tendency to make poetry do service for religion, and elevated it to the rank of an *individual* religion, from the age of sixteen on; and also one might add the acknowledgment, made in the same volume, that Yeats only "attained to greatness against the greatest odds"; but surely this is sufficient as it stands for our purpose. The trouble with it, as a critical statement, is that though Yeats did change his style after *Responsibilities,* 1914, and cut away from his earlier manner much metaphorical trash, yet he did not thereby change himself. The earlier Yeats implies also the later, with this modification: the later is both more mystical and more explicit. Where the earlier poet was frankly the last of the Preraphaelites, magically transposed from the English 'nineties into the fairy-tale world of old Celtic mythology, the later poet is concerned only with a message that is far more esoteric (if less directly nationalistic, or picturesque, or optimistic) than the old. He is forever telling us of the "great year" of the Neo-Platonists, the "kalpas" of Hindu speculation, the precession of the equinoxes that governs human affairs, the cycles of history that have been traced by Giambattista Vico, by Flinders Petrie, by Frobenius, by Henry Adams, by Oswald Spengler.

In short, the later Yeats derives directly from that strange volume, *A Vision: An Explanation of Life Founded Upon the Writings of Giraldus and Upon Certain Doctrines Attributed to Kusta Ben Luka* which he published in London ten years ago, later withdrew, and has always since threatened to rewrite. He believes, as the preface of that book states, that "truth cannot be discovered but can be revealed"—through certain symbols; and

it is with the symbols which he has discovered to be most potent for the revealing of truth that these plays in the present volume are concerned. They are four, being concerned with the obsession of the arrogant intellect and the doom that rests on all thought that is not ballasted by instinctive folk-feeling ("The Words on the Window Pane"), the ebbing and flowing of physical love ("Fighting the Waves"), the birth and death of supernatural belief ("The Resurrection"), and finally the shifting nature of the supernatural itself, which is beyond good and evil ("The Cat and the Moon"). Thus these four plays, with their attendant prefaces, form a sort of epitome of Yeats' own experience in life, as well as a restatement of his own highly mystical philosophy. In the Swift play, the first in the volume, and the only one using the realistic apparatus and language of the modern state, he writes an epitaph on his own early following of Tyndall and Huxley, a bitter comment on all who use science for material ends, as well as a sardonic epigraph to the attempt to strike a balance between external political power and inner spiritual life achieved or dreamed for a moment in the Irish eighteenth century. In the second, the Cuchulain play, he shows that love itself is bound, not by constancy, but by renunciation and renewal of object; in the third, he daringly interprets the resurrection of Christ as an extension of the myth of Dionysus; and in the last, the angel who guards the sacred well of healing gives to the blind man sight but not the blessedness of beholding God, while to the lame man who chooses to keep his lameness comes blessing, but he remains the butt of the world's scorn. And to these four plays, he has attached, further, four dedications, describing the first as a "house," the second as a "mask," the third as a "ship," and the fourth as a "sword." Surely, therefore, it is not correct to say with Mr. Eliot that the later Yeats is any more clear and direct, or less mystical that the earlier: or that he is too much of a sane person to try and take the kingdom of heaven by magic.

It is, indeed, a purely magic world to which Yeats attempts to give us the password; and that, because in his experience, the world we men inhabit is ruled by nothing but pure contingency. Except for Berkeley, Plotinus, some Indian sages, the attempts of every philosopher to show us what in the world is known by us and why we know it are to him utterly false and vain. A world of complete contingency is necessarily always also a world pervaded

by myth, and it is with the coming into being of myth and its passing away that he is more and more absorbed. All things, he keeps telling us over and over, are ruled by the Great Wheel, the Cycle of Human Destiny that governs man's multiform desires, and that Wheel proceeds from initial violence to the waking of desire and to the tempered intelligence and then through thickening abstraction till at last all dies away and violence alone rewakens and remains. Today is a period when the veil trembles, perhaps is to be rent apart at last.

> Some philosopher has added this further thought: the classes arise out of the matrix, create all mental and bodily riches, sink back, as Vico saw civilization rise and sink, and government is there to keep the ring and see to it that the combat never ends. These thoughts in the next few generations may affect the masses. They have already deepened our sense of tragedy and somewhat checked the naïver among our creeds and parties who push their way to power by flattering our moral hopes. I suggest to the Cellars and Garrets that though history is too short to change either the idea of progress, or the eternal circuit into scientific fact, the eternal circuit may best suit our preoccupation with the soul's salvation, our individualism, our solitude. Besides, we love antiquity, and that other idea—progress—the sole religious myth of modern man, is only two hundred years old.

What a strange word is this, to be addressed to a generation so deaved and defeated by the uprise of the mass-powers of today, the coming of the second Industrial Revolution of electricity and oil, the upsurgence of Russian Communism and European Fascism, the bawling of the prophets of a "planned economy," the roaring of forces unleashed from the ages before human life ever was, or man began to think! However we may rank Yeats the poet, the man who wrote these lines stands utterly aloof from the current that governs modern life; he is one that never will accept the dialectical materialist myth of the embattled proletariat, or the social-service myth of modern religion. He prefers the charlatan wizardry of the spiritualist, that modern version of the medicine-man of old, although he says that all psychic phenomena are but secondary dramatizations embodied to fit the event, coming from forces beyond our knowledge or control.

Surely there is no message here for those who believe in progress either in a straight line or through catastrophe. "We love antiquity." If, as Eliot has hinted, this mysticism is unorthodox, and only a personal substitute for some fixed religious dogma, it is all the more mystical in that it exists and has been restated in our day by a major poet. Besides, it can express itself in the subtlest and the most delicate forms of beauty:

A strange unserviceable thing,
A fragile, exquisite, pale shell,
That the vast troubled waters bring
To the loud sands before the day has broken.
The storm arose and suddenly fell
Amid the dark before day had broken.
What death? What discipline?
What bonds no man could unbind,
Being imagined within
The labyrinth of the mind,
What pursuing, or fleeing,
What wounds, what bloody press,
Dragged into being
This loveliness?

Follow the Furies, by Eleanor Carroll Chilton. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co. $2.50.

Andrew Nelson Lytle

FOLLOW THE FURIES is a very daring book for these times . . . not daring, as we have been taught to expect, in the *papier maché* realism of the literary melting pot, where the esthetics of Greenwich Village "expressed" for such a long short while the barnloft morality of its more provincial days. Her boldness is not lettered exhibitionism: it is a treatment of the forces of good

and evil as they operate under certain given conditions. This she has done with great technical skill, staying clear of propaganda or the social problem novel. Her characters never behave as if they were directed by the premises of some social system. This is because the author, unlike the sociological brand of romanticists, does not conceive of their conduct in terms of man against his traditional inheritance. Her point of view is more formal: the state of society determines the limitations of action, not the forces which bring it about. It is scarcely necessary to point out that Miss Chilton's point of view is always evident, without appearing overtly to clutter up the progress of her story.

Hugh Linton, a successful author, lives in the country suburbs near his New York publisher, who is also his mistress. He is a militant rationalist, believing in Progress and its material goods. Although he has abandoned religion along with the other "superstitions," his novels are preachments. The action begins when his daughter, whom he has educated, returns from school to be told that her mother has been seized with a peculiar form of paralysis. The mother, a beautiful and charming woman, comes from a Catholic family whose beliefs she temporarily abandoned when she decided to live with Hugh, first out of, then in, the holy bonds. There is no theological argument involved. The Catholic family merely becomes the representation of all those cultural forms with which the institutions of a traditional society are endowed. Therefore Hugh Linton, the antagonist, must show he can build a better world for himself and family without any of the aids his wife's people rely upon.

His system is put to the test when his daughter, a sensitive, introspective girl, is faced by something reason cannot explain: her mother's illness. This throws the girl at once into her tragic position. When she fails to explain the inexplicable, the girl decides to poison her mother. (She has already learned that the disease must be fatal.) She discovers that the death of her mother has solved nothing. By accident she learns something of the implications of the thing she has done, and in this way begins to feel with terror the fateful role she is being driven to play. Deprived by her father of the relief to be got from her mother's church and deprived, by his self-centered behavior, of confession to him, her only real intimate, she begins to follow the furies that drag her to self-destruction.

The plot is as closely constructed as a play, and up to the murder of the mother it moves with power and economy; but between this point and the daughter's suicide, there is a change of speed and intensity. This is due, I believe, to a serious structural defect. First, there is a swift, intense, and unbroken movement up to a tragic climax; then a series of episodes which appear to be arbitrarily connected to bring about the final tragic ending. If *Follow the Furies* had been written as a play, the nature of its flaw would have been at once apparent to the author. It would have been clear that the material demanded two plays: the murder of the mother; the girl's suicide. You cannot, in a play, reach the climax half-way through; then begin exposition which, if it could not have been disposed of in the first act, cannot be disposed of at all. Indeed, if we examine the *Atridae,* and Miss Chilton's title and subject matter suggest the comparison, there is perhaps the need even of another section dealing with the father, for at times Hugh Linton, not his daughter, becomes the protagonist. This comment is advanced with hesitation, because the novel is not a play and there is no literary tradition to prohibit the novelist from doing pretty much what he pleases. Nevertheless, there is the break in styles which drops the novel in the middle, a drop that is more noticeable since the plot has been so strictly built. This does not mean that the author has failed to reduce a very difficult subject matter to its proper form. In spite of this possible defect the story is generally exciting and sustained.

Act of Darkness, by John Peale Bishop. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.50.

Manson Radford

If evil is one of the themes of tragic literature it is a difficult one for the modern novelist. It requires a sure moral orientation that is at once simple and accurate; simple, if fiction is not to turn into philosophy, and accurate, if evil is not to become suffering or circumstance.

Mr. John Peale Bishop does not make either mistake in his first novel, *Act of Darkness,* which, as the title implies, is a story of evil. The central character, Charles Marston, is a farmer and by inheritance a gentleman. He belongs to a landowning class in which we might expect to find the human sensibilities not only developed but specifically formed. But in his life the land and class have little relation; he does not choose, or it is not possible for him, to live within the pattern of tradition. Instead, like the true intellectual, he refuses a formal education and selects certain qualities within himself by which he hopes to endure. Or it may be that these qualities are not so much within himself as fragments of tradition. In either case the result is an isolation, a separation of life into individual desires and appreciations. For Charles Marston masculinity or, in a broader sense, manhood becomes strength and an achievement—and eventually disaster. He is forced to deny the thing he had chosen as infallible. Or perhaps he did not deny his manhood, rather abused it; his mistake may not have been in setting his individual will above life but the manner in which he chose to do it. The reader is entitled, a rare privilege, to his own decision. For Mr. Bishop has succeeded in making evil, moral disorder as he calls it elsewhere, so intimate and human as to become entirely real and concrete. If it is necessary to analyze and abstract it, some moral attitude must be understood and one is more or less as good as another. This is the fictional talent in its finest order and Mr. Bishop's achievement is a brilliant one in the story of Charles Marston; immediate and direct in its dramatic impact and rising to intense power in the scene of his trial.

Sensitively aware of the construction of a novel, Mr. Bishop is an extremely skillful writer though occasionally he overreaches himself. He employs an artificial and very individual prose in certain passages that is not so effective as a simpler rhythm might have been. This is a minor point and, moreover, the intention is accurate; good prose is artificial, at times more so than others. This firmness and accuracy of intent is an unusual quality of the book. In the hands of such a mature craftsman any particular part, whatever it may be in itself, contributes to the whole pattern.

But there is in this novel more than the whole pattern in a technical sense. The novel is concerned with a people rather than a collection of characters assembled for fictional consideration. It treats of a life in which

the relation between individuals passes beyond the purely intellectual and economic into a certain congential association, specifically of the past as well as the present. Most Southern novels as well as others today belong in this class, and as excellent as some of them are, they fail as a rule in the same respect. To put the matter in its simplest terms, they are unable to achieve any position that will include both past and present. This is not true of Mr. Bishop's work. His characters do not fall apart into generations, one for richness of detail and another for action and contemporary interest. But he has to face in another respect and on a higher plane essentially the same problem. Here it has become a question of dramatic balance; evil being what it is, too violent to stand alone. It is necessary that this sense of a people being one thing in time as well as space be more than a static perspective; it is necessary that it should be in itself as dynamic as the evil it engenders.

Mr. Bishop, following classic models, offsets his evil with the ultimate consciousness of a character, something of the same super-perception of reality that in Shakespeare is granted only to the defeated. In the conclusion, Charley's nephew, the narrator and observer of the action, awakens suddenly to poetry in one of the most beautiful and effective passages in the book. It is a powerful incident, but it is not enough, for John is too truly the adolescent, eager to obscure the particular in generalization. His salvage from disaster is an appreciation of art. Later when he performs at last the simple act of sex we are no longer interested, the mind fumbling for what has been missed. He goes away to a new life taking his past, as he understands it, with him. The other characters like dancers evolving from a figure return to their individuality, leaving the floor empty of its intricate pattern of beauty.

If the novel suffers in this respect, it is within its own terms; there is little with which to compare it. Certainly it is outstanding, not only in power but in richness. Great-Aunt Maria and John's grandfather, Jeems Marston, are vivid in detail and striking in reality; behind them is as accurate a description of Southern life as has been written. Mordington, West Virginia, is a perfect setting for Mr. Bishop's purpose. It is one of those Virginian settlements which, for military and political reasons, were included forcibly with the quite different counties of the west when West Virginia was formed

during the Civil War. Thus by accident they escaped Sherman, and more important, reconstruction, so that the destruction which was the inevitable result of Northern triumph was delayed. After the war they lived much as they had before, not understanding what had been lost. When the reckoning came, roughly around the turn of the century, it appeared in the form of slow pressure; and the degeneration that ensued, its origin fought over and forgotten, seemed natural. The forms of life began to go to pieces of themselves but the outlines remained.

In one respect *Act of Darkness* presents a difficulty to the critic. It is a first novel without any body of similar work by the author to reinforce its meaning and define its form. At the same time it cannot be treated as indicative. It is complete and final in itself and demands attention as such in comparison with the best in modern fiction. Ultimately, perhaps, its most distinguished quality is a mature ambition and high seriousness rare in any writer.

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